Hafa Adai!

Visitor arrivals up 136% in September 2023. PAGE 2

The Making Waves Summit set in Guam Oct. 20-21. PAGE 4

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Palacios agrees need for 902 talks

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

» Says issue he wants to raise is 'touchback' provision

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios has agreed with Senate President Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) that it's time to convene 902 Consultations between the CNMI and the U.S. administration of President Joseph Biden.

Palacios

DeLeon Guerrero

Palacios in an interview on Thursday said he is considering for a while to request 902

See 902 on Page 4

About $4M allocated to MVA for FY 2024

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Marianas Visitors Authority, despite initially requesting significantly more, was allocated just a little over $4 million for its fiscal year 2024 budget.

Concepcion

During an MVA board meeting last Thursday, board members discussed MVA's budget for 2024 and it was learned that the agency's estimated budget for fiscal year 2024 is $5,399,602 despite initially requesting about $12 million.

However, according to MVA managing director Chris Concepcion, of the $5.3 million, only about $4.5

See MVA on Page 4

Two winding-up petitions filed against IPI for alleged failure to pay judgement amounts

Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC's Imperial Pacific Resort in Garapan is shown in this file photo.

BJ EDDY

By BEN BLASCHKE
Inside Asian Gaming

Editor's Note: Reprinted with permission

Imperial Pacific International Holdings Limited, the Hong Kong-listed parent company of troubled Saipan casino operator Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC, said it is "considering its options and seeking professional advice" after receiving two winding-up petitions for alleged failure to pay judgement amounts.

See IPI on Page 4

Palacios stops by House to talk about gov't challenges

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios stopped by the House of Representatives last Thursday to talk with some members of the government's challenges.

Palacios left the House when the members were about to start their session.

In an interview when he was leaving the House, the governor said he knew

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INSIDE

BUSINESS
There's much to get excited about at The Tsubaki Tower this month as the Tumon resort announced the launch of its new fall experiences.
PAGE 11

NATION
For the unforeseeable future, Laila El-Haddad has one mission: to get the voices of her fellow Palestinians, along with their pleas for help, out to the rest of the world.
PAGE 12

WORLD
Desperate Palestinians scrambled for escape from northern Gaza on Saturday or huddled by the thousands at a hospital in the target zone.
PAGE 13

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Local

Visitor arrivals up 136% in September 2023

Arrivals to the islands of Saipan, Tinian and Rota grew 136% to 19,483 visitors in September 2023, compared to 8,256 visitors received in September 2022, according to the Marianas Visitors Authority.

Total visitor arrivals to the Marianas in fiscal year 2023 were 194,661, a 180% increase compared to 69,647 arrivals in fiscal year 2022.

In fiscal year 2023 visitors from South Korea doubled, increasing 201% compared to fiscal year 2022 to 159,315 visitors; South Korea also comprised 82% of all arrivals to the Marianas. In fiscal year 2023 visitors from Japan increased 901% compared to fiscal year 2022 to 7,360 visitors and comprised 4% of all arrivals to the Marianas, and visitor arrivals from China increased to 4,309 visitors compared to 191 visitors in fiscal year 2022.

For the final month of fiscal year 2023, visitor arrivals from South Korea reached 16,444 compared to 6,502 in September last year. Jeju Air, T'Way, and Asiana Airline operate a total of 29 regular flights each week to Saipan. During the Chuseok holiday period in late September Jeju Air operated 10 additional flights to Saipan in cooperation with major travel agencies, and Asiana Airlines upgraded its equipment to A330 aircraft with larger seat capacity for six flights in response to high demand. With the end of summer and the off-season approaching, four weekly seasonal flights from Busan by Jeju Air will end on Oct. 29 as scheduled, and Asiana Airlines will suspend its four weekly flights from Seoul through Dec. 19, 2023.

The Marianas received 502 visitors from Japan in September 2023 compared to 202 visitors in September 2022. In addition to other marketing campaigns, the MVA's newly launched "Marianacation Tabitoku"—or Travel Deal—promotion aims to entice visitors with special offers from United Airlines, local hotels, and MVA member businesses. The MVA continues to face the obstacles of a strong U.S. dollar, weak yen, and Japanese hesitancy to travel overseas due to fears of COVID, especially as a large percentage of Japanese children are not vaccinated.

China arrivals in September 2023 were at 854 compared to 38 arrivals in September 2022. Prior to the pandemic, China was one of the top source markets for the Marianas. Most visitors from China are free independent travelers, or FITs, arriving via Seoul and Tokyo. The China National Tourism Administration reinstated the Marianas on its Approved Destination Status list in August, allowing package tours and charter flights to the destination once again. The Commonwealth Ports Authority is also requesting the U.S. Dept. of Transportation to approve a separate number of flights allowed to the Marianas, as before the pandemic and separate from the total quota authorized flights to the U.S.

In September the Marianas also received 718 visitors from Guam, 573 visitors from the United States, and a combined 392 visitors from all other markets.

Overall, visitor arrivals to the Marianas recovered 46% in fiscal year 2023 compared to fiscal year 2019 before the pandemic. ***(MVA)***

3.2% benefit increase for SSA, SSI beneficiaries in 2024

Social Security and Supplemental Security Income benefits for more than 71 million Americans will increase 3.2% in 2024, the Social Security Administration announced Friday. On average, Social Security retirement benefits will increase by more than $50 per month starting in January.

More than 66 million Social Security beneficiaries will see the 3.2% cost-of-living adjustment beginning in January 2024. Increased payments to approximately 7.5 million people receiving SSI will begin on Dec. 29, 2023. (Note: some people receive both Social Security and SSI benefits).

"Social Security and SSI benefits will increase in 2024, and this will help millions of people keep up with expenses," said Kilolo Kijakazi, acting commissioner of Social Security.

Some other adjustments that take effect in January of each year are based on the increase in average wages. Based on that increase, the maximum amount of earnings subject to the Social Security tax (taxable maximum) will increase to $168,600 from $160,200.

Social Security begins notifying people about their new benefit amount by mail starting in early December. Individuals who have a personal my Social Security account can view their COLA notice online, which is secure, easy, and faster than receiving a letter in the mail. People can set up text or email alerts when there is a new message--such as their COLA notice--waiting for them in my Social Security.

People will need to have a my Social Security account by November 14 to see their COLA notice online. To get started, visit www.ssa.gov/myaccount.

Information about Medicare changes for 2024 will be available at www.medicare.gov. For Social Security beneficiaries enrolled in Medicare, their new 2024 benefit amount will be available in December through the mailed COLA notice and my Social Security's Message Center.

The Social Security Act provides for how the COLA is calculated. The Social Security Act ties the annual COLA to the increase in the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) as determined by the Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics.

To read more, visit www.ssa.gov/cola. ***(SSA)***

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$50K bail imposed on repeat offender

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Superior Court has imposed a $50,000 cash bail on a repeat offender who was arrested anew for allegedly molesting a minor.

Last Thursday, Superior Court Associate Judge Wesley Bogdan imposed a $50,000 cash bail on Tyron Farley Reyes Fitial, a tier three registered sex offender who was arrested anew for allegedly sexually molesting a minor.

Fitial, 38, is currently facing one charge; sexual abuse of a minor in the third degree.

Following the bail hearing, Fitial was remanded back to Department of Corrections' custody where he will await further court proceedings.

According to the complaint against Fitial, he sexually touched a minor last Oct. 7.

The minor told forensic investigators that in the early morning of Oct. 7, while she was sleeping in the living room, she woke up to find that Fitial was touching her inappropriately.

She said Fitial told her she had a nice body and not to tell her sister.

She added that she was scared and stayed up to wait for her older sister to get ready for work.

In the morning, the minor said her sister and Fitial dropped her off at a relative's house where she said she told her nephew about the incident. The nephew then told his grandfather who called for police assistance.

Fitial is a former detention guard at the Juvenile Detention Unit who pleaded guilty back in 2011 to enticing a minor, but not actual sexual penetration.

In 2012, Fitial was sentenced by the U.S. District Court for the NMI to serve 15 years imprisonment for enticing a 12-year-old girl detained at the former Kagman Juvenile Detention and Correctional Facility to meet with him and engage in sexual activity.

Following this, the Office of the Attorney General filed in the Superior Court 11 criminal charges against Fitial over the same incident.

In 2013, the Superior Court sentenced Fitial to 15 years imprisonment for the same charges. The local court sentence ran concurrently with the federal sentence.

SCS 2023/2024 1st quarter honor list

The Saipan Community School released its honor list for the first quarter of school year 2023-2024.

"Principal's List" 4.00 –(No grade below a "A")

- Fiona Yu-4th grade
- Iyani Muna-5th grade
- Elin-8th grade
- Tony Xiao-7th grade
- Ian Chae-8th grade
- Ray Patrick McDonald-8th grade
- Jihun Park-8th grade
- Emma Sablan-8th grade
- Jose Sablan-8th grade
- Annabella Tudela-8th grade
- Richard Zhao-8th grade

"A" Honor Roll 3.50 to 3.99 – (No grades below a "B")

- Jeordan Buduan-4th grade
- Christopher Chen-4th grade
- Arianna Deleon Guerrero-4th grade
- Aileen Kim-4th grade
- Lennox Sablan-4th grade
- Anthony Damian Camacho-5th grade
- Jihan Delos Reyes-5th grade
- Dennis Guo-5th grade
- Hee Soo Han-5th grade
- Chaeyeon Ko-5th grade
- Seung Woo Lee-5th grade
- Joshua McDonald-5th grade
- Olivia Um-5th grade
- Jina Chun-6th grade
- Hiyori Okuma-6th grade
- Jesus Rufo Villagomez-6th grade
- Vivian Chung-7th grade
- Dayeon Ko-7th grade
- Elijah Pangelinan-7th grade

"B" Honor Roll 3.00 to 3.49 – (No grades below a "C")

- Troy Anthony Aldan-4th grade
- Riel Mina Choi-4th grade
- Mileah Dowai-4th grade
- Sehwa Lim-4th grade
- Leila Pangelinan-4th grade
- Melvin Reyes-4th grade
- Kana Van Ee-4th grade
- Amethyst Winkfield-4th grade
- Aileen Zhou-4th grade
- Oshea Zhu-4th grade
- Bailey Parsons-5th grade
- Keaven Punzalan-5th grade
- Ryan Macaranas-6th grade
- Claire Oh-6th grade
- Hui An-7th grade
- Alyssa Brasuell-7th grade
- Jiyun Lee-7th grade
- Christine May Kim-8th grade
- Daniel Nae-8th grade
- Erine So-8th grade ***(PR)***

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The Making Waves Summit set in Guam Oct. 20-21

SINJANA, Guam—from Oct. 20 to 21, 2023, The Micronesia Climate Change Alliance and Our Common Wealth 670, in partnership with the Tishman Environment and Design Center at The New School, are gathering esteemed local and global Indigenous and Environmental Justice movement leaders at The Making Waves: For Peace and Climate Justice Summit in the Mariana Islands at Central Community Arts Hall in Sinjana.

Babauta

The participants will share proven community climate solutions and develop a Declaration of Peace and Unity for the Pacific region to be delivered to the United Nation's COP 28 and 29. The Declaration will be used to inform high-level decision-makers with specific calls to action in the following areas:

■ Establishing a Peace and Prosperity Zone

■ Demanding Indigenous Sovereignty, Decolonization, and Cultural Healing

■ Environmental Health and Ecological Regeneration

■ Just Transition, Recovery, and Climate Justice

The Making Waves Summit is being held at a critical moment, as the Pacific region has been gravely affected by multiple climate disasters, including the powerful typhoon Mawar, said to be the strongest storm to blow across the Island of Guam in more than two decades in May of this year.

While the island's people are slowly recovering from the disaster's devastation, including power shortages and limited access to water, the U.S. has increasingly militarized the region.

Organizers of the summit are alarmed and calling on leaders from Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, the Philippines, Hawaii, the South Pacific, and from across the United States to convene at the Summit and stand in global solidarity.

Environmental justice leaders from Puerto Rico and New Mexico know far too well the destructive past of the U.S. military's actions and their environmental health impacts.

"Chamorro indigenous women from Saipan and Guam, leading the coordination of the summit, feel the urgency more than ever to unite the Mariana Islands for transnational, intergenerational healing and strengthen our collective fight as Indigenous peoples for our rights to sovereignty. We need peace and climate solutions that work and don't harm our people, the lands and water. It is time to heal in the Pacific," noted former representative Sheila Babauta, who served District 4 of the Northern Mariana Islands House of Representatives.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

MVA

From page 1

million was allocated to MVA and the rest of the budget is comprised of leftover monies left unspent from previous fiscal years.

"Initially, MVA requested roughly $12 million so what we were allocated was significantly less. That number, however, is based off of pre-COVID-19 budget numbers. If we wanted to bring the tourism industry back to pre-COVID levels, we need pre-COVID budget. That's why we submitted an initial request of $12 million. Ultimately, a little over $4 million was the safe projection from the Legislature and the Office of Management of Budget, and so we went with that plus some savings we had from the last fiscal year that we didn't fully exhaust. So, we're going to add that to our fiscal year 2024 budget which is how we came out with the $5.3-million figure," he said.

Concepcion shared that this budget, compared to last fiscal year, is significantly less as MVA had been surviving off of ARPA funds.

ARPA stands for the American Rescue Plan Act.

"Compared to last year, its much less because last year we did have ARPA funding that was used to supplement MVA's expenditures because the Hotel Occupancy Tax law, which gives 80% of the revenue generated from that tax to the MVA, was suspended for the last two fiscal years. We have just been surviving off funds that were given to us from ARPA during Covid. All of that went all to different TRIP programs, travel agency support programs that were going on during COVID. There was quite a lot that was spent during the last two years after the pandemic," he said.

Because their budget is much smaller than they initially requested, Concepcion said MVA has had to make necessary cuts in order to stay afloat.

"We did have to cut a lot of our spending in different areas throughout operations. We have implemented austerity; we are observing the 72-hour per pay period plan currently in place," he said.

Concepcion added that the priority right now is maintaining operations, maintaining a presence in markets like Japan and Korea, and ensuring that CNMI signature events continue.

"Our biggest priority with this budget is operations. We need to make sure that we're open and that we have enough staff to run our operations here in the CNMI. That's a big part of our expenses. We also have to maintain our presence in the market so really our second top priority is our offices in Japan and Korea. We need to maintain a presence in those markets in order to survive and thrive. Our third priority is really the events held in the CNMI throughout the year. These are our signature events like the Taste of the Marianas, the Saipan Marathon, Hell in the Marianas, the new Rota Marathon this January, Pika Festival, and all the different smaller event held throughout the year that are not necessarily hosted by the MVA but we support like the Flame Tree Arts festival, and other events held by other agencies and organizations," he said.

902

From page 1

Consultations and see what kind of areas that they need to discuss.

DeLeon Guerrero recently introduced Senate Joint Resolution No. 23-05 that requests U.S. President Joseph Biden and Palacios to convene Covenant Section 902 Consultations to discuss, negotiate, and address immigration and workforce issues, economic crisis, military expansion, transportation, and other pertinent critical issues affected the CNMI.

Article 9, Section 902 of the Covenant, commonly referred to as 902 Consultations, provides a mechanism for the CNMI and the U.S. to meet and discuss challenging issues affecting their relationship.

Palacios said he agrees with DeLeon Guerrero as there are issues that need clarity or they need to bring them up to President Biden.

"One of them is the touchback," said the governor. He did not elaborate.

Touchback refers to the requirement under the CNMI-Only Transitional Worker program for foreign workers to leave the CNMI before their work visas could be renewed for a third consecutive time. That departure requirement also means they will have to stay away until a new permit is approved, which could take months.

Effective last Sept. 30, the "touchback" provision officially took effect.

DeLeon Guerrero stated in the joint resolution that the implementation of the "touchback" requirement will adversely impact the CNMI's economic recovery and the availability of the required skilled workforce.

DeLeon Guerrero said CNMI Department of Labor Secretary Staffler noted that the CNMI currently has over a billion dollars in construction projects scheduled or ongoing, but does not have enough construction workers on island, even without the "touchback" provision in place.

The Senate president said the establishment of the Temporary Labor Certification CW-1 permit requirement also continues to cause delays in permit processing and workforce access impeding business activities and recovery efforts.

She said businesses cannot provide goods and services if they do not have their requisite workforce.

DeLeon Guerrero pointed out that the passage of H.R. 560 that Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) in U.S. Congress is one way to assist the CNMI with its immigration and workforce issues.

H.R. 560 seeks to grant Marianas-only permanent residence to certain long-term foreign workers and investors already lawfully present in the islands.

DeLeon Guerrero said the legislation would bolster the nation's strategic interests in the Western Pacific by maintaining the population and prosperity of the Marianas.

She said the lack of workforce in the CNMI also impacted the U.S. military expansion on Tinian.

The Senate president said the military contractors will need skilled workforce for their projects on Tinian.

In addition to immigration and workforce problems, DeLeon Guerrero said the CNMI is also experiencing extreme issues with transportation including air and sea which are intensified by the low tourist arrivals and high cost of fuel in the CNMI.

She said with only 40% of the pre-pandemic visitors coming to the CNMI, the CPA's airport revenues are not sufficient to cover all its current airport personnel and operations.

In addition to the high cost of inter-island travel, DeLeon Guerrero said earlier this year the United Airlines decided to price gouge the CNMI residents who travel to Guam for medical, personal or business reasons.

She said after the COVID-19 pandemic, United Airlines skyrocketed the airfare from Saipan to Guam from approximately $380 to $587 round trip.

The president said the only way to get to Guam is by airplane as there is no ferry boat taking passengers to the island.

She said sea transportation or shipping to the CNMI and between the islands is also super expensive because of the Jones Act restrictions.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

CHALLENGES

From page 1

they're having a session so he just wanted to say "hi" actually.

He said he also told the House members about the government's challenges and the need to continue to work together.

Palacios also underscored the need to meet with the lawmakers more often.

"So, we're going to try to schedule a meeting, regular meeting times to see what the challenges are, with both the House and the Senate leadership," he said.

During the session, House floor leader Rep. Edwin K. Propst (D-Saipan) disclosed that before the session Palacios discussed with them about the government's many challenges, including funding for healthcare insurance.

In that session, the House passed some bills, including one that would establish an excise tax for betel nut/areca nut and lime mix.

A day before he signed into law the budget bill for the government's operations in fiscal year 2024 last Sept. 30, Palacios visited the House to talk to some members about when the revenue generating legislations would start coming out.

He said he is very concerned with the lack of revenue that the CNMI is facing.

IPI

From page 1

According to a Wednesday filing, IPI received a winding-up petition on Sept. 14, 2023, from Mr. Guan Chubin, filed with the High Court of the Hong Kong SAR, on the basis of the alleged failure by the company to settle the judgment amount of HK$20.8 million (US$2.66 million) plus interest and costs, with a hearing scheduled to be heard on 22 November 2023.

A second winding up petition was received on Oct. 3, 2023, filed by Ms. Wang Yi, for alleged failure to settle the judgment amount of HK$5.3 million (US$677,700) plus interest and costs, with a hearing scheduled to be heard on Dec. 6, 2023.

IPI did not specify exactly what the judgement amounts referred to, adding that the petitions have only been filed as application for the winding-up of the company and no winding-up order has been granted.

Nevertheless, it issued a warning to shareholders that, should the winding-up orders be granted, "any disposition of the property of the company, including things in action, and any transfer of shares of the company, or alteration in the status of the members of the company, made after the commencement of the winding up, shall, unless the court otherwise orders, be void."

IPI added that its Board of Directors, which saw two members step down earlier this week, is "currently assessing the impact of the petitions on the business operations and financial position of the Group."

The petitions come with IPI facing a revocation hearing with the Commonwealth Casino Commission (CCC) of the CNMI before the end of the year, with the regulator looking to revoke the company's casino license for failure to comply with certain requirements under its license agreement.

The CCC first filed five complaints against IPI in 2021 for failure to comply with certain requirements under its license agreement.

Those five complaints specifically related to IPI's failure to pay its annual US$15.5 million license fee in August 2020, failure to pay its annual US$3.1 million regulatory fee in October 2020, failure to contribute US$20 million to the community benefit fund in both 2018 and 2019, failure to comply with its minimum US$2 billion capital requirement and failure to comply with a CCC order to pay all money owing to its vendors.

While IPI's license has been suspended since April 2021, the company has been actively working to prevent full revocation—arguing that its failure to pay mandated fees was a result of force majeure. IPI's casino, Imperial Palace Saipan, was closed in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

IPI has touted its desire to reopen the casino should it find outside investment, but the company hasn't been able to prevent the sale of its gaming equipment which has seen more than US$1 million raised to pay back contractors via a series of online auctions.

Camacho slams DPL's Santos; calls for her ouster

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

Saipan Mayor Ramon Blas "RB" Camacho slammed Department of Public Land Secretary Teresita A. Santos last Thursday and blames her for what he described as the "substandard" condition of many roads on Saipan due to the "questionable quality" of the materials used for road repairs.

In a press briefing at the Office of the Mayor in Susupe, Camacho also urged Saipan residents to sign a petition calling for Santos' ouster. He said the petition will continue for two more weeks, and numbers of signatures will be determined by the end of this week.

He also expressed belief that this spat between him and Santos may be politically motivated.

He said the poor state of residential roads in many villages have especially worsened due to the recent bad weather and passage of Typhoon Bolaven. "Thank God we didn't get a direct hit from this typhoon," he said.

Camacho said the allotted hundred cubic yards per quarry per year that DPL allows him is not enough to cover the work that needs to be done. "Broken roads are not a seasonal problem. ...It's an everyday problem. Once the heavy rain comes to us, expect those coral…to be washed out. And there's a lot of people staying in those areas. We received a lot of complaints and requests for road repair, especially now…," he added. "…As a mayor, I cannot wait on this kind of game because I'm too concerned to serve the people. …That's my responsibility and…I don't take that position lightly."

In his official statement, which he also handed out in written form, Camacho said, "As the mayor of this municipality, I would like to extend my sincere apologies to our community concerning the substandard condition of our main road and secondary road within the villages. The root cause of this issue lies in the questionable quality of the materials used for road repairs, which is currently under scrutiny by the Department of Public Land."

Camacho said this is not the time to play games. "The typhoon just passed us and [there have been] a lot of heavy rains and a lot of washouts on the gravel roads, so again my concern here is the safety of the people, but she's treating us here on Saipan carelessly and recklessly," he added.

The mayor claims that a recent incident that happened in DPL causes him to believe that the drama is politically motivated. He said Santos, appears to be approaching this matter as a form of negative politics.

"Additionally, she expressed disappointment in me as the mayor of this municipality due to my decision to release a former employee of [the] former mayor. …It is disheartening to witness politics still being used as a tool for division, long after the elections have concluded. Ms. Santos' political schemes of these issues is adversely impacting my ability to provide essential services to the people of Saipan, especially during periods of heavy rainfall. … Secretary Santos' actions seem to disregard the safety and well-being of our community. In this regard, I firmly believe that it is imperative for us to come together to address this issue. Secretary Santos' apparent incompetence in fulfilling her duties and responsibilities as the secretary of Public Lands is obstructing my efforts to serve the people of Saipan effectively.

"It is evident that politics is being played at the expense of our citizens," he stated

Camacho claims that Santos is seeking to remove him from office as well. "Notably, Ms. Santos has organized a group, both within her office and outside it, with the intention of initiating a recall campaign against me in January or February. The origins of this endeavor are undeniably rooted in political motivations, as she utilizes her office to further personal agendas rather than serving the public," he said.

Saipan Tribune was unable to obtain Santos' comments as of press time.

CHRYSTAL MARINO

Saipan Mayor Ramon Blas "RB" Camacho last Thursday urged Saipan residents to sign a petition calling for Public Lands Secretary Teresita A. Santos' ouster.

NOTICE OF DISSOLUTION

Jun Yi Corporation
PMB 128 BOX 10003, Saipan MP 96950

The limited liability company under the name of Jun Yi Corporation is filing this Notice of Dissolution effective October 13, 2023.

The Jun Yi Corporation has been in business and has been gratified to contribute to CNMI's development. We are extremely proud of our accomplishments in the past years. Unfortunately, due to the current financial difficulties, the running of Jun Yi Corporation has been difficult, like the rest of the companies in the CNMI. Due to this situation, we regret to shut down our company.

On this date of October 13, 2023, the company is winding up the disclosure of the Jun Yi Corporation.

/s/ Rongkun Xiao
Secretary

Faith, Hope and
KARIDAT
Catholic Charities - Diocese of Chalan Kanoa

A Northern Mariana Islands Social Service
JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT
(1) ACCOUNTANT

For more information, job description and an application visit the Karidat main office in Dandan Village, Dandan Road, or interested applicants can email: info@karidat.org to receive a position description and fillable application form.

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED: A completed application form, copy of diploma/degree, resume/bio-data; current police clearance within 6 months and a copy of valid CNMI driver's license.

NO PHONE INQUIRIES PLEASE.
CLOSING DATE: FRIDAY, October 20, 2023 AT 4:00 PM

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2nd Floor Arrival Bldg.
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950 |
Phone: (670) 237-6500/1 • Fax: (670) 234-5962
Website: www.cnmiports.com

NOTICE OF INVITATION FOR BID ADVERTISING CONCESSION AT THE FRANCISCO MANGLONA BORJA/TINIAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Project No.: CPA-IFB-005-23
CPA Concession No.: TAD-2023-01-02

Notice is hereby given that the Commonwealth Ports Authority (the "CPA") is accepting sealed bids, subject to the terms and conditions of the Invitation for Bid (the "IFB"), and other contract provisions, for bids from firms, companies, and/or corporations for Advertising Opportunities at the Francisco Manglona Borja/Tinian International Airport.

The IFB will be issued and available for pick-up beginning September 27, 2023, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday to Friday, at the Administration Office, 2nd Floor, Arrival Building, Saipan International Airport or at the CPA Office located at the Francisco Manglona Borja/ Tinian International Airport. CPA offices are closed every other Monday beginning Monday, October 2, 2023 for austerity reasons and also on holidays. The IFB includes layouts of the advertisement area and other requirements. All responses to this IFB shall also take into account any and/or all costs that will be charged to the bidder awarded the contract for the project. Prospective bidders will be required to pay an administrative fee of $100.00 for costs associated with handling and consideration of the bid.

Questions and/or clarification concerning this project shall be in writing and sent to the attention of the Tinian Port Manager, Antonio L. Borja through email at alborja@cnmiports.com with copy to Joy Ann Tenorio at joy.tenorio@cnmiports.com no later than October 11, 2023.

All bids shall be sealed and marked on the cover package outside as follows: "INVITATION FOR BID SUBMISSION: CONFIDENTIAL, ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITIES, COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY CPA-IFB-005-23." One (1) original and two (2) copies of the bid must be submitted no later than 2:00 p.m. Chamorro Standard Time, October 31, 2023, to the Authority Administration Section, Office of the Executive Director, 2nd Floor, Arrival Building, Saipan International Airport.

Bids will be opened on October 31, 2023, at 3:00p.m. at the Commonwealth Ports Authority Meeting Room, Saipan International Airport. Bids are not required to include a prepaid minimum concession fee. The concessions are for the right to advertise at certain designated locations within the Francisco Manglona Borja/Tinian International Airport for a period of two (2) years and requires the concessionaire to operate such concession to the satisfaction of the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason, if in its sole opinion to do so, would be in CPA's best interest. CPA further reserves the right to waive any defects in said bids if in its sole opinion to do so would be in CPA's best interest. All bids shall become property of the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

9/25/2023
Date

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

Tel. (670) 234-6866/234-9447 • Fax. (670) 234-9021 • Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp • Website: www.nmhcgov.net

Arnold I. Palacios
Governor

David M. Apatang
Lt. Governor

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

This ad is paid for by NMHC funds.

Notice is hereby given that the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) is the agency authorized to allocate $2,186,599 of Low Incoming Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) in the CNMI. The United States 1986 Tax Reform Act created the federal low-income housing tax credit program under Section 42 of the Internal Revenue Code (Code) to assist with the development of low-income rental housing by providing qualified owners with credit to offset their federal tax obligations. The LIHTC is available to owners/developers of qualifying buildings and projects that meet certain low-income occupancy and rent restrictions.

Section 42 of the Code provides that the CNMI prepare a Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP) to determine housing priorities and to give preference to projects serving the lowest income tenants and projects obligated to serve qualified tenants for the longest periods. The QAP must incorporate selection criteria, which include project location, housing need characteristics, sponsor characteristics, tenant populations with special needs, and public housing waiting lists. There are no changes from the previous QAP which included capital needs assessment, limiting developer fees, and income averaging.

Application for Credits

Owners/Developers wishing to apply for the Credits may obtain and complete a LIHTC Application. The LIHTC Application will be available on the NMHC's website at www.nmhcgov.net by selecting the "LIHTC Tab".

Owners/Developers must file the completed LIHTC Application along with the **$2,500.00 Application Fee** at NMHC's Office by the Application Deadline of **4:30 p.m., October 20, 2023.** NMHC staff will then review the applications and will notify the Owners/Developers of any deficiencies within 14-days time and the Owners/Developers will be given 14-days to correct any deficiencies and to provide any supplemental information requested by NMHC. The projects will be scored and recommendations will be made to the NMHC Board of Directors for approval at its **November/December 2023** Board Meeting.

Notification of Awards

NMHC will notify Owners/Developers of the projects receiving Credits within fifteen (15) days following the November/December 2023 Board of Directors meeting. The reservation letter must be signed and returned to NMHC by no later than fifteen (15) days from the date of notification.

For more information on this program, please contact NMHC at (670)234-6866/9447.

/s/ **JESSE S. PALACIOS**
Corporate Director

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

Join the Guam Habitat Conservation Plan meeting

The University of Guam Center for Island Sustainability, in collaboration with the Guam Department of Agriculture and other partners, invites the community to a public meeting regarding the Guam Habitat Conservation Plan.

This meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2023, from 4:30pm to 8pm and will be held at the Jesus and Eugenia Leon Guerrero School of Business and Public Administration Building on campus.

The meeting will discuss the progress made in developing the Guam HCP, address questions from the community, and gather valuable feedback.

The Guam HCP is a long-term strategy aimed at safeguarding endangered species and their habitats, preserving Guam's unique biological and cultural heritage for future generations, and promoting sustainable economic development and streamlined regulations.

This plan will play a crucial role in shaping future land use planning and supporting the sustainable implementation of existing land use plans.

"This meeting is a testament to UOG's dedication to fostering community engagement and collaborative efforts," UOG president Anita Borja Enriquez said. "By supporting the Guam Habitat Conservation Plan discussion, we affirm our commitment to preserving our island's rich biodiversity, ensuring a sustainable future for both our community and the environment we call home."

UOG

Dr. Else Demeulenaere, associate director at the UOG Center for Island Sustainability.

UOG

The University of Guam Center for Island Sustainability and Sea Grant, in collaboration with the Guam Department of Agriculture and other partners, will host the Guam Habitat Conservation Plan meeting on Oct. 17, 2023.

Dr. Austin Shelton, director, UOG Center for Island Sustainability and Sea Grant, said, "Caring for our island environment is not just a responsibility; it's a shared vision we must all support. By coming together, sharing knowledge, and empowering one another, we pave the way for a greener, more sustainable tomorrow for us and generations to come."

Over the past two years, Dr. Else Demeulenaere, associate director at the UOG Center for Island Sustainability, and her team at CIS and Sea Grant, have collaborated with local and federal agencies to develop the Guam HCP.

"We initiated our collaboration with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services, Guam Department of Agriculture, and the consulting firm ICF during the summer of 2021," said Demeulenaere. "This project has been complex, with many moving parts, and we are eager to engage with stakeholders and the public."

Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands are home to several endemic species found nowhere else in the world. Due to their small populations, they are at risk of extinction in the face of changing land use. In 2015, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services listed 23 species in Guam under the Endangered Species Act.

As Guam's population continues to grow, the demand for places to live, work, and enjoy recreation, along with necessary infrastructure like roads, schools, restaurants, and housing, increases. This growth can lead to conflicts over land use.

The Guam HCP aims to help the government of Guam find a middle ground as it strives to protect Guam's unique species while facilitating responsible development and ensuring the preservation of endangered species' habitats.

At the meeting, Demeulenaere and her team will present their vision for conserving endangered species and their cultural significance while promoting sustainable economic development through this plan.

For more information about the meeting, visit guamhcp.com or contact Caley Chargualaf:

■ Email: chargualafc10679@triton.uog.edu

■ Phone: (671) 797-5985. ***(UOG)***

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
3rd Floor, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building
P.O. Box 501220 CK • Saipan, MP 96950-1220
Tel: (670) 664-4282 • Facsimile: (670) 235-5131

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to the Open Government Act (1 CMC §9901 et seq), the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation ("CUC") Board of Directors hereby informs the general public that the Board will hold a **Special Board meeting** on **Thursday, October 19, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.** The meeting will be held at the CUC Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Joeten Dandan Building to consider the following agenda. Public attendance is welcome.

AGENDA

I. Preliminary Matters
A. Call to Order
B. Roll Call
C. Reading of Notice Calling Special Meeting
D. Adoption of Agenda

II. Water/Wastewater Stipulated Order Matters

III. Public Comments*

IV. Executive Session**

V. Adjournment

/s/
JANICE A. TENORIO, CHAIRWOMAN

*Public comments are limited to 30 minutes and each remark is limited to three minutes. Everyone is welcome to submit written comments.
**Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9912, the Board of Directors may vote to meet in executive session at any time.

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

OPENING DATE: October 06, 2023 **CLOSING DATE: October 23, 2023 TIME: 4:00 P.M.**

NMHC JVA No.	Positions:	Salary
2023-022	1-CDBG-DR Housing Grant Specialist-Saipan	$25,000.00-$30,000.00- per annum- UNGRADED
2023-023	4- Homeowner Assistance Fund (HAF) Program Administrative Specialist	$25,000.00- per annum- UNGRADED

Employment application form, detailed job description, qualification requirements and other information may be accessed at www.nmhcgov.net or www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com.

Applicants may submit their applications through the following options: Submission at the at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan; or at the Drop Box located in front of the NMHC Central Office building; or email application and documents to officemanager@nmhcgov.net.

All applicants must complete and submit the NMHC Employment Application Form together with required documents that are listed in the Employment Application Package. Failure to provide the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. NMHC and all its properties are drug-free zones; therefore, selected applicant will be subject to pre-employment drug screening.

It is the policy of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) that the merit system will be applied and administered according to the principle of equal opportunity for all citizens and nationals as defined by its personnel regulations and the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Constitution regardless of age, race, sex, religion, political affiliation or belief, marital status, disability or place of origin.

For inquiries, please contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager, at (670) 234-6866/9447or by email to officemanager@nmhcgov.net . NMHC is a fair housing agency and an equal opportunity provider, lender and employer.

/s/
JESSE S. PALACIOS
Corporate Director

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp • Website: http://www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com

INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)
NMHC IFB 2024-001

(This ad is paid by NMHC by HUD funds)

BID SUBMISSION DATE: November 08, 2023, 2:00 p.m.

PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM (PSS) TINIAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL REHABILITATION PROJECT- PHASE II

Project Package will be available on October 09, 2023, at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan, during regular working hours (7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) Monday thru Friday except CNMI holidays. A non-refundable payment of One-Hundred Dollars ($100.00) is required for each set of the project package. Payment must be made payable to NMHC and receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the project package at the reception counter.

The provisions on the NMHC Procurement regulations, NMIAC 100-60-725 AND 100-60-730 Prohibiting Gratuities, Kickbacks and Contingent Fees shall apply.

A Mandatory Pre-Bid Conference will be held at the NMHC Field Office in Tinian located at the NMC Campus in Tinian on October 20, 2023, 10:00 a.m. In addition, a Mandatory site Visit/Inspection of the project site will be conducted immediately after the Pre-Bid Conference. Failure to attend both the Mandatory Pre-bid conference and the Mandatory site Visit/Inspection will be considered a non-responsive bidder.

For more information, contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager, at (670) 234-9447 or via email at officemanager@nmhcgov.net during business hours, 7:30am – 4:30pm Monday through Friday, except CNMI holidays.

/s/ JESSE S. PALACIOS
Corporate Director

/s/ MERCED "MARCIE" M. TOMOKANE
Chairwoman
NMHC Board of Directors

ANTONIO SN. BORJA, Chairman — JAMES M. MENDIOLA, Vice Chairman — HENRY H. SAN NICOLAS, Member — DONALD M. HOFSCHNEIDER, Member — CHARLENE M. UZAMA, Executive Director

TINIAN CASINO GAMING CONTROL COMMISSION
Municipality of Tinian and Aguiguan
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9910(a), the Tinian Casino Gaming Control Commission (TCGCC) hereby gives notice that it will hold its Regular Meeting on Thursday, October 19, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. at the TCGCC Conference Room.

AGENDA

I. **PRELIMINARY**
a. Call to Order
b. Roll Call
c. Adoption of Agenda
d. Adoption of Minutes
1. August 7, 2023 – Regular Meeting

II. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**[1]

III. **REPORTS**
a. Chair's Report
b. Executive Director's Report

IV. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**
a. Status Update of Bridge Investment Group/ Tinian Diamond Casino

V. **NEW BUSINESS**
a. Special Amendment - First Addendum to Section 16 Agreement between TCGCC and Bridge Investment Group – Section 7 Terms and Conditions
b. ED Recommendation No. 2023-03
c. ED Recommendation No. 2023-03.CSI/CSI(e)
1. TCS John Huxley
d. TCGCC Travel Policies and Procedures

VI. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**[2]

VII. **OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS**

VIII. **MISCELLANEOUS AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

V. **ADJOURNMENT**

[1] *Public comments are limited to 30 minutes and each remark is limited to 3 minutes. Everyone is welcome to submit written comments.*
[2] *Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9912, the Commission may vote to meet in executive session at any time.*

UOG

The Isla Center for the Arts at the University of Guam will simultaneously feature two international traveling exhibitions featuring printed works of art. The exhibits will continue through Nov. 17, 2023.

UOG

Various forms of printed art are on display at the Isla Center for the Arts at the University of Guam, which hosts two international traveling exhibitions through Nov. 17.

UOG hosts two international traveling exhibits

The Isla Center for the Arts at the University of Guam is simultaneously featuring two international traveling exhibitions of printed works of art. The exhibits opened yesterday, Oct.12, and will continue through Nov. 17, 2023.

"We are very pleased to offer these two international traveling printmaking exhibitions for everyone to enjoy in person," said Dr. Velma Jean Yamashita, associate professor of Art and Coordinator, Isla Center for the Arts. "Exhibitions such as these allow us to fulfill part of our mission to provide our students and the community with an international art experience."

One traveling exhibit is titled "Thinking of Place III." The other is titled "Female Correspondence."

UOG

The work of dozens of artists from Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Argentina, Poland, United Kingdom, Ireland, Serbia, Turkey, Guam and other parts of the United States, among others, are on display at the Isla Center for the Arts at the University of Guam.

UOG

University of Guam employee and alumna Joleen Unas' work is featured along with the work of others from UOG and from countries across the world at the Isla Center for the Arts at the University of Guam.

86 artists from 9 countries

Thinking of Place III is a collaborative print project that involves 86 artists, 86 prints, and 16 international print groups from Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Argentina, Poland, United Kingdom, Ireland, Serbia, Turkey, Guam and other parts of the United States.

The exhibit invited artists to invoke a legend, myth, story or an aspect of ancestral heritage in relation to their personal identification with geography and environment. To learn more, click the link: https://www.thinkingofplace.com.

Prints created by two UOG alumni, Joleen Unas, Bachelor of Science in Computer Science and minor in Fine Arts, 2019; and Daena Perez, Bachelor of Arts, Fine Arts, 2019, are included in the exhibit.

Unas, a junior computer operator at UOG, submitted her work during the pandemic.

"I wanted to spread some hope and dreamed that if people saw my work, good things would come to them, and from one person to another, I wanted this positivity to spread throughout the world," Unas said. "Now, three years later, the piece has returned to Guam, and the world is finally getting back on its feet after the pandemic."

With her part-Japanese heritage, Unas said her printed art "Amabie" was inspired by a Japanese legend that made her hope the pandemic would pass.

Dr. Irena Keckes, associate professor of Art at UOG, coordinated the printmaking group Perspectives that included the two Tritons' artwork. Click this site to see their art: https://www.thinkingofplace.com/uploads/1/3/2/9/132958293/top_iii_catalogue_22a.pdf.

Pairs of artists exchanging prints by mail

The second exhibit, Female Correspondence, involves 18 artists from Croatia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Guam, and other parts of the United States.

Participating artists had one correspondence partner with whom they exchanged prints throughout one year, the project's website added.

"It is my honor to share this remarkable intercontinental printmaking project with communities in Guam," Dr. Keckes said.

If you're attending:

When: The exhibit continues through Nov. 17, 2023. Gallery hours are Monday through Friday, 10am-5pm; Saturdays, 10am-2pm

Where: Isla Center for the Arts, No. 15 Dean's Circle, University of Guam Campus. The exhibition will be on display from Oct. 12 to Nov. 17, 2023.

Contact: For more information, call 671-735-2965 or email islacenter@gmail.com. ***(UOG)***

GRMC visitation to restrict children under 12 beginning Oct. 15

DEDEDO, Guam —Effective yesterday, Oct. 15, 2023, Guam Regional Medical City no longer permit visitors under the age of 12, except for Comfort Care patients. The revision of visitation guidelines serves as an added measure of caution for the safety of patients and children in clinical areas.

The following information reflects GRMC's current Visitation Guidelines. Be advised that children under the age of 12 visiting Comfort Care patients, as well as visitors for any level of care under 18, must be supervised by an accompanying adult (18 years of age or older) at all times.

Additionally, visitors under 18 cannot be left unattended in the patient room; the patient does not qualify as adult supervision.

All COVID-19 positive patients are still not permitted any visitors, except for pediatric patients in the Emergency Department, where one parent/guardian may be present.

Med-Surgical/Telemetry

Patients are allowed up to two visitors between 9am -9pm daily.

Intensive Care Unit (ICU)

Patients are allowed up to four visitors every hour from 9am-10am, 10am-11am , 1pm- 2Ppm; 2pm-3pm; 8pm-9pm. No visitors will be permitted from 11am-1pm, 3Ppm-8pm. No switching will be permitted regardless of level of care.

Appointments and procedures (without hospital stay)

Outpatients are allowed one adult companion (18 years or older).

Emergency Department

Patients in the Emergency Department are allowed one visitor with no rotation. Pediatric patients, both COVID-19 positive and negative, must be accompanied by a parent/guardian.

Comfort Care

Patients in Comfort Care are allowed up to four visitors between 9am and 9pm daily. Children under the age of 12 must be supervised by the accompanying adult at all times, and cannot be left in the room unsupervised with the patient. The patient does not qualify as adult supervision.

Morgue

There is no limit of visitors for viewings in the morgue. However, visitation is limited to two hours.

GRMC would like to thank the community for their continued cooperation and support as we navigate through changes that continue to foster a safe environment for our patients, visitors, and staff. ***(PR)***

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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Mark Rabago EDITOR
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MEMBER

The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

THERE ARE PLANS TO COLONIZE MARS...
I FEEL SORRY FOR THAT PLANET.
LAS VEGAS SUN 2023
MIKE SMITH
DIST. BY KING FEATURES SYNDICATE/NAS

EDITORIAL

During challenging times, caring for one's mental health is essential

These are difficult, often frightening, times.

Nobody knows better than we who cover the news that it's difficult to be confronted with the worst of humanity day in and day out. There are awful people doing awful things on a daily basis, and it can take a tremendous toll to absorb that ugliness and violence and harm.

That's why we'd urge everyone to take a break, even if only for 15 minutes. Turn off your phone. Sit in the sunshine. Be quiet and calm. Recharge. Try to find a moment of peace.

The weekend's events in Israel are the latest reminder that the forces of evil are determined and unrelenting, but also that the scenes of horror are never far from reach in our interconnected world.

Reports of indiscriminate rocket attacks and the deliberate targeting of civilians by Hamas forces, followed by the swift and violent Israeli response, were available instantaneously via social media platforms—terror beamed directly into the palm of your hand.

Though one need not look beyond the borders of Hampton Roads to be confronted with terrible events—acts of violence, political acrimony, a worsening climate, economic hardship, unfathomable inhumanity. These lead the news, not because they're good for ratings (contrary to popular belief), but because they are notable. They are outliers in communities where good things happen every day, though they may not get the attention they deserve.

There's a term for endlessly reading bad news on social media—doom scrolling—and medical experts believe it's having a deleterious effect on the nation's mental health. The American Psychiatric Society reported in December that "nearly two out of five (37%) Americans rated their mental health as only fair or poor. The United States has recorded a 16% increase in suicides from 2011 to 2022 and a drop in average life expectancy from 79 in 2019 to 76 in 2021.

The United States recorded about 50,000 suicides in 2022, a 2.6% increase over the previous year. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that an estimated 12.3 million thought about suicide in 2021, and that 1.7 million adults attempted it.

At a conference last month at Dartmouth College, Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy and six of his predecessors gathered to discuss the nation's mental health crisis. They highlighted barriers to access and the disconnected network of mental health services that can make it challenging to get help to people who need it.

But they also zeroed in on social media creating feelings of sadness, hopelessness and depression, especially among young people. In addition to improving health care access and services, they stressed the need to build stronger, more supportive communities.

Murthy worries that people see the worst of others in the

See DURING on Page 9

Iran's role in Israel conflict is like a Russian nesting doll

By MARC CHAMPION
Bloomberg Opinion

Marc Champion is a Bloomberg Opinion *columnist covering Europe, Russia and the Middle East. He was previously Istanbul bureau chief for the* Wall Street Journal.

It has been as unsurprising as it is grotesque to see Iran's leaders applaud Hamas' "victory" even as evidence of atrocities against Israeli women and children mounts. From here on, the outlook becomes much more complicated for Tehran, but so too for Israel and the U.S. We still don't know exactly what role Iran played in Saturday's attack on Israel by Hamas, but there's growing evidence that Tehran's client at least asked permission, and that means Israeli and U.S. policy makers will have to factor it into their responses.

Iran is no longer as isolated or vulnerable as it once was. The war in Ukraine has shuffled geopolitical alignments and, as a result, possibly for the first time since the 1979 revolution, Tehran can count on powerful friends to give it at least diplomatic protection. Its role in providing Moscow with attack drones for its invasion of Ukraine has ensured that.

Andrey Gurulyov, a former Russian military commander and now member of parliament for the ruling United Russia party, said on his Telegram channel Monday: "We and China will not allow the adoption of an anti-Iranian resolution in the UN Security Council." Gurulyov isn't in the Kremlin, so he doesn't make the decisions, but it's unlikely he's wide of the mark. A China-brokered agreement to restore Tehran's relations with Saudi Arabia has also helped to stabilize that relationship.

The importance of Iran's oil supply to suppressing prices on the global market, and its potential to disrupt much larger flows through the Strait of Hormuz also offer a measure of leverage, if not protection.

At the same time, as many have said already, the process of normalizing relations between Israel and the Arab world had been making progress since the 2020 U.S.-brokered Abraham accords. A deal adding Saudi Arabia was on the table, even as Israel embarked on a no-concessions policy in dealing with Palestinians living in Gaza and the West Bank. All that hit a wall on Saturday—a clear win for Iran.

For Hamas and Iran's clerical leadership, both dedicated to eradication of Israel, the Jewish state's regional normalization had been humiliating and called in question their purpose—either as a self-styled strike force for the Palestinian cause or as a revolutionary Islamic Republic. The Hamas attack is precisely the kind of ostentatiously disruptive operation Iran has wanted to see for years, and offers a welcome distraction from its many internal problems.

The 1979 revolution is today a gerontocracy. Its battle cries of "Death to Israel" and "Death to America" no longer resonate with the growing majority of the population that has only known rule by an Islamist dictatorship it despises. Decades of U.S. and then European sanctions have failed to force a change of regime behavior, but they have stunted the development of a potentially vibrant economy.

The urban classes have revolted over liberties, the poor over lack of means and prospects, and women over their brutal repression by the deeply misogynistic cult that runs the country. None of these mass protests have succeeded, because the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps remains ready and willing to kill to protect the regime, yet they have left an out-of-touch leadership insecure.

For the Iranian regime, the main concern is that war with an enraged Israel, fully backed by the force of the U.S., could if miscarried be its last fight, or equally could mark the end of Hezbollah, its proxy force in Lebanon, says John Raine, a Middle East specialist and senior adviser for Geopolitical Due Diligence at the international Institute for Strategic Studies in London. That's why Iran has in recent years tried to avoid a direct conventional war with either.

At the same time, the challenge for the U.S. and Israel is punishing Iran without just expanding the coming conflict's cost and destruction for themselves. Invading a nation of 88 million that's cut through by mountains and more than 2.5 times the size of Ukraine isn't an option. Strikes on the IRGC and its proxy forces outside Iran can have an impact, yet the Iranians need to present sufficient targets

See IRAN'S on Page 9

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

It's time to close the sustainable energy gaps in Asia and the Pacific

By ARMIDA SALSIAH ALISJAHBANA
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana is the under-secretary-general of the United Nations and executive secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. years and for The Los Angeles Times *since 1974.*

This year we pass the halfway mark both on our journey toward implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, and the signing of the Paris Agreement on climate change.

Asian and Pacific countries have seen mixed progress on both. One of the most pressing challenges is the transition to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all, as encapsulated by SDG 7. Without a significant acceleration of effort, reaching SDG 7 and its targets for energy access, renewable energy and energy efficiency will elude our region. Given the significance of Asia and the Pacific in terms of global energy supply and consumption, actions taken here will set the tone for the global trajectory of progress on SDG 7 and the fight against climate change.

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific will place these issues at center stage during this week's Asian and Pacific Energy Forum. This meeting will provide a platform for the region's energy ministers to plan a regional agenda for a sustainable energy transition.

Looming large among these issues is the lack of access to electricity and clean cooking fuels for hundreds of millions of people. This deprivation has far-reaching consequences, and is a harsh reminder that, while the region has made significant strides in economic development, not everyone has enjoyed the fruits of progress. Lack of access to electricity hinders healthcare, education and economic opportunities. Moreover, the reliance on traditional cooking fuels such as fuelwood contributes to respiratory diseases that disproportionately affect women and children. Energy poverty exacerbates existing inequalities, trapping communities in a cycle of deprivation.

To bridge the energy gap and promote climate-friendly sustainable development, increasing renewable energy and energy efficiency is an imperative. The transition to renewables opens avenues for economic growth and job creation. Energy efficiency lowers the need for new supplies, relieves pressures on our energy systems, increases productivity and reduces waste, simultaneously saving money for households and businesses. Together, renewable energy and energy efficiency foster energy security.

Realizing the SDG 7 targets requires increased financial flows. According to the Secretary-General's Global Roadmap for Accelerated SDG Action, annual investments in access to electricity must increase by $35 billion and by $25 billion for clean cooking by 2025. A tripling of renewable energy and energy efficiency investment is needed by 2030. Scaling up finance at this rate requires a large infusion of private finance to bolster insufficient public sources, alongside a shifting of national budgets away from fossil fuels. Carbon pricing mechanisms can incentivize businesses to transition toward cleaner energy solutions. Innovative business models and financial instruments can attract international finance. But for these to be successful, governments must provide predictable and enabling policy environments.

To ensure the stability of the energy transition over the long term, governments must keep an eye on over-the-horizon risks. Key among these is the ensuring and adequate, stable and predictable supplies of critical raw materials needed to construct the millions of solar panels, wind turbines, and batteries of the future. Our region holds immense potential for critical raw materials production, making it a key player in the global energy transition. However, regional collaboration is needed alongside responsible mining and extraction practices that minimize environmental damage and social disruptions. Moreover, investing in recycling of critical raw materials can reduce our consumption of finite resources.

While transitioning toward clean energy is a moral and environmental imperative, a just transition ensures that no one is left behind as countries move away from fossil fuels and toward sustainable resources and technologies. This includes reskilling and reemployment opportunities for workers in declining industries, as well as community support to mitigate the socio-economic impacts of the energy transition.

Achieving SDG 7 requires a multifaceted approach. This is not a challenge that any one country or sector can solve in isolation; it demands collaboration, innovation and shared responsibility. As we reflect on our progress at this halfway point, it is timely for countries across Asia and the Pacific to recommit to a regional vision where all citizens have access to clean and modern energy and the full potential of renewables and energy efficiency are realized. The momentum behind these changes is growing and the opportunity to close these gaps must be seized.

CSC anticipates indirect cost reimbursement support

By RAYMOND M. MUNA
SPECIAL TO SAIPAN TRIBUNE

In response to the *Saipan Tribune*'s recent article dated Oct. 5, 2023, titled "OGM Recommends Indirect Costs Reimbursements Designated to Affected Agencies," the Civil Service Commission is eagerly anticipating potential support through indirect cost reimbursements.

This anticipation aims to address lingering obligations and secure services for an administrative hearing officer.

With a backlog of appeal cases, the commission remains steadfast in its commitment to upholding due process for civil servants, recognizing the essential need for administrative hearing support.

A significant portion of our government workforce consists of civil servants, vital for the efficient functioning of our government. The commission emphasizes expediting pending appeal cases, ensuring civil servants receive the justice and due process they rightfully deserve.

While acknowledging prevailing financial challenges, the commission calls for a proactive approach from our government to prevent delays in civil servants receiving due process.

"We understand the current financial difficulties facing our government. Unfortunately, our civil servants feel the impact with reduced hours and the absence of within-grade increases. And now, their right to due process in appeals is currently being overlooked. We firmly advocate for a proactive approach, emphasizing the critical need to prioritize due process for our civil servants. To achieve this, securing funds for an administrative hearing officer is essential," said CSC chair Raymond M. Muña.

The commission maintains optimism about proposed amendments to House Bill 23-56, especially the allocation of indirect cost reimbursements. We express gratitude to Rep. Blas Jonathan "BJ" Attao for introducing H.B. 23-56 and the Office of Grants Management for recommending a portion of indirect cost reimbursements. Their support underscores a shared commitment to addressing challenges faced by the commission. We look forward to sustained collaboration with government stakeholders to address these pressing issues and safeguard the rights of civil servants.

Raymond M. Muna is the chairperson of the CSC.

DURING

From page 8

events around them, and come to believe that's an accurate reflection of society.

"I think we're actually more grounded in the core values of kindness and generosity, of service and friendship. I think that's what we want," Murthy said.

To be there for others—to provide the sort of support and compassion that helps those in turmoil and models positive behavior for kids—we have to first care for ourselves. And at a time of international conflict, domestic unrest and unspeakable horrors done by one group against another, that can begin simply—by turning off your phone, setting aside the news for a few minutes and taking time to be at peace.

Those who are having trouble coping, and for whom a few minutes of calm is insufficient, please reach out for help—to a family member, a friend or a medical professional. Dial the suicide hotline at 988 if you feel like you're a danger to yourself and need help immediately.

The challenges before us are immense and they require our attention and concern. We should be engaged, informed and working to build more just and supportive communities.

But everyone also has to make an investment in their well-being, time that can make a lasting difference in your life and the lives of others.

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IRAN'S

From page 8

to be hit, and may not oblige.

Air strikes within Iran could even do Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei a favor, prompting his domestic opponents to rally against a common foreign threat. Relatively few ordinary Iranians would relish picking a fight with the U.S. or Israel, but it's worth remembering that Qassem Soleimani, the IRGC Al-Quds force head assassinated by the U.S. in Iraq, in 2020, was one of the nation's most popular figures. Even regime opponents backed the idea of fighting Sunni radicals such as Islamic State abroad, so they would not have to do so at home.

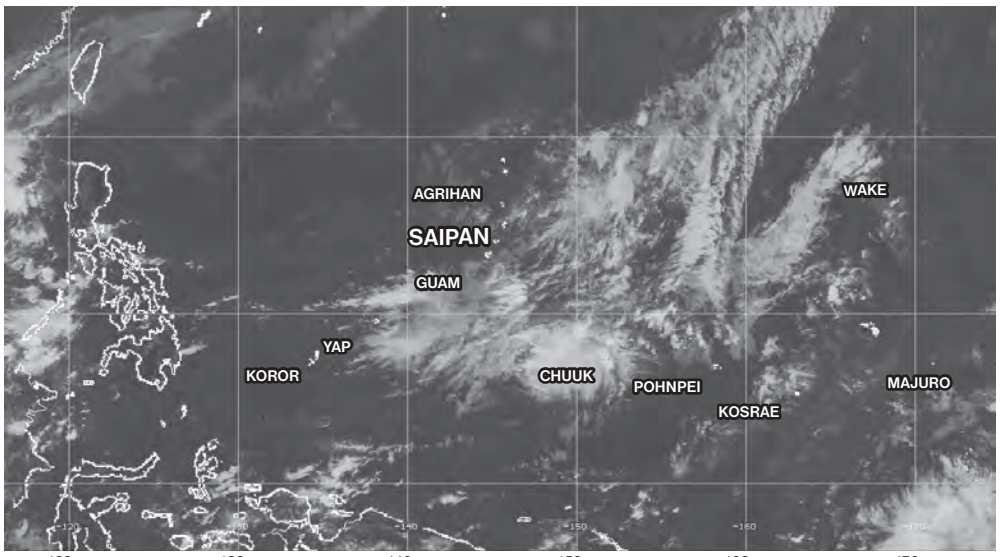
The pressure on both Israel and Iran to expand Operation Iron Sword against Hamas into a regional war is real. But a wider war is far from inevitable. Iran's ultra-conservative leadership "will lionize Hamas as this fight goes on, but the time will come when it is under pressure to put its money where its mouth is, because Hamas will have its hat out there for help," says Raine. In Syria and Iraq, that meant sending IRGC personnel to the front lines, but the stakes in Gaza are much higher. Even Hamas, having made sure Israel would have to attack its stronghold in Gaza, can't be sure if Iran's aging Islamist revolutionaries will come to its rescue.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Partly sunny with scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms. Light and variable winds becoming southeast around 10 mph in the afternoon.	Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers. South winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.	Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.	Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.
84 77°	87 77°	87° 78°	87° 78°	87° 78°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 8:23 AM, SUNDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2023

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Doppler radar and satellite imagery showers mostly cloudy to overcast skies with isolated showers for the Mariana Islands. Yesterday, 3.61 inches of rain fell. Guam is in the middle of the 5th wettest year on record. Altimetry shows 8 to 10 feet to west and 7 to 9 to the east. Tanapag shows 9 to 10 feet and Ipan shows 1 to 2 feet.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: https://www.weather.gov/gum/

MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorm	85° / 77°
Palau	Partly Cloudy	86° / 79°
Yap	Partly Cloudy	86° / 80°
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	87° / 80°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorm	88° / 76°
Kosrae	Thunderstorm	88° / 76°
Majuro	Thunderstorm	87° / 82°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:08 AM	5:56 PM
Tuesday	6:08 AM	5:55 PM
Wednesday	6:09 AM	5:55 PM
Thursday	6:09 AM	5:54 PM
Friday	6:09 AM	5:54 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	7:07 AM	6:53 PM	-
Tuesday	8:00 AM	7:35 PM	-
Wednesday	8:56 AM	8:22 PM	-
Thursday	9:55 AM	9:16 PM	-
Friday	10:55 AM	10:14 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Mostly Cloudy	64° / 57°
Beijing	Mostly Sunny	66° / 45°
Hong Kong	Sunny	86° / 75°
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	86° / 77°
London	Showers	57° / 50°
Los Angeles	Sunny	77° / 59°
Manila	Partly Cloudy	91° / 79°
Melbourne	Showers	70° / 48°
Miami	Thunderstorm	86° / 77°
New York	Partly Cloudy	59° / 52°
Osaka	Mostly Cloudy	75° / 64°
Paris	Showers	63° / 54°
Busan	Rain	70° / 61°
Rome	Mostly Sunny	73° / 54°
Salem	Mostly Cloudy	75° / 45°
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	64° / 51°
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	72° / 52°
Tokyo	Showers	66° / 61°
Washington, DC	Windy	62° / 49°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY	FEET	
02:23 AM	Low Tide	0.08
08:46 AM	High Tide	1.79
2:35 PM	Low Tide	0.83
7:59 PM	High Tide	1.80

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF OCTOBER 8, 2023

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	9:50AM	10:30AM	Daily

SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)

UA824	7:25AM	9:55AM	1, 3, 5

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily
UA193	6:55PM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Palau
UA183	7:20PM	9:10PM	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/703	4:20AM	10:35PM	1, 4, 5, 7
7C3403/2305	4:45AM	10:20PM	Daily
UA117/183	9:50AM	9:10PM	Daily via Guam
UA117/193	9:50AM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

TW308	3:15AM	7:00AM	Daily
OZ626	4:20AM	7:55AM	1, 4, 5, 7
7C3403	4:45AM	8:35AM	Daily
7C3405	4:10PM	7:45PM	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

7C3451	3:20AM	6:30AM	1, 4, 5, 7

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:50AM	Daily

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

UA825	9:25PM	1:50AM+1	2, 4, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:25PM	4:25AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA192	10:25PM	6:10AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
PR110	10:30PM	4:25AM+1	Daily
UA184	11:50PM	5:50AM+1	2, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

OZ702/625	12:05PM	2:55AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7
UA184/174	10:25PM	8:50AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6,7 via Guam
UA192/174	10:25PM	8:50AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
7C2306/3406	11:10PM	3:10PM+1	Daily
UA184/174	11:50PM	8:50AM+1	2, 5 via Guam

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3406	9:30AM	3:10PM	Daily
TW307	8:30PM	2:15AM+1	Daily
OZ625	9:25PM	2:55AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7
7C3404	10:10PM	3:40AM+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

7C3452	9:35PM	2:20AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2022

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30	9:00	Daily
1302	11:00	11:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
1302	12:00	12:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
1303	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

LIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	12:00	12:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	13:00	13:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
3102	14:00	14:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
3103	16:30	17:00	Daily

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily

Business

The Tsubaki Tower launches fall F&B experiences, menus

TUMON, Guam—There's much to get excited about at The Tsubaki Tower this month as the Tumon resort announced the launch of its new fall experiences.

Now in its third year, Tsubaki Fest, the popular food and beverage festival that features cuisines and beverages from around the world, takes place each Friday and will feature cuisines from Japan (Oct. 13), Spain (Oct. 20), and South America (Oct. 27).

Detailed information about the menus and pairings can be found on The Tsubaki Tower's Facebook and Instagram pages (@thetsubakitower). Reservations can be made by phone at (671) 969-5200. The cost is $90 for adults and $54 for children (plus 10% service charge). PHR Club and military discounts are accepted.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Tsubaki Fest returns each Friday with new international cuisine experiences from Japan, Spain, and South America.

Milano Grill and La Cantina reopen

Milano Grill - La Stella -, located on the 27th floor, reopened on Oct. 4 and offers high-end Italian fusion fare through its ala carte and La Stella ($160 per person plus 10% service charge) and monthly special Regalo ($180 per person plus 10% service charge) menus. The restaurant's menus highlight the best choices of meats and the freshest seafood and carefully selected produce and ingredients by some of the finest chefs on the island. The Milano Grill - La Stella - also boasts an extensive wine and cocktails menus that provide perfect pairing options to complete the unforgettable experience. The restaurant offers two private dining rooms for dinner parties of up to 12 people. Its sweeping ocean and city views make The Milano Grill - La Stella – is one of the most romantic settings on the island. Dinner is served nightly, except for Sundays and Tuesdays, and reservations are highly recommended.

Within steps of The Milano Grill - La Stella - is La Cantina, the resort's stylish wine and cocktails bar. The upscale atmosphere is complemented by live music Wednesday to Saturday each week. Guests are invited to enjoy cocktails, wines, and whiskeys before or after their dinners, and La Cantina has quickly become a favorite spot for sunset chasers.

New Afternoon Tea and Hinekka Deli menus launched

The resort recently launched its new Afternoon Tea menu, which guests can enjoy in the sun filled Fanhale' Lobby Lounge with a spectacular view of Tumon Bay. New on the menu is the Lobster Quiche, a lobster and spinach-filled parmesan goodness perfect for a light afternoon meal. Other items include Roasted Squash, Prawns with Cream cheese Bread Roll, Potato Pancakes, and a delectable Wagyu Beef and Truffle Sandwich. To complement the resort's gourmet tea offering are the house-made pastries—Bon Bon Chocolate, Chocolate Planet, Chocolate Cream Puff, Cherry Tart, Tropical Mousse, Seasonal Scones served with Citrus Jelly and Clotted Cream. Afternoon Tea is served from 2pm to 4pm daily, and reservations are required 48 hours in advance. The cost is $40 per person (plus 10% service charge with a minimum of two guests per reservation).

Similarly, The Hinekka Deli, located at the resort's lobby level, has added more gourmet breads to its daily offerings. The Tsubaki Tower's master bakers have introduced Curry Pan, Bacon Epi, Lobster Pizza, Pain Au Chocolat, and more that can be found daily starting at 8am.

Autumn Staycation announced

Now through Oct. 31, The Tsubaki Tower is offering a residents-only Camellia room promotion that includes breakfast for two at Casa Oceano, a 15% discount at all Tsubaki Food & Beverage outlets, and a complimentary mini bar. The special nightly rate is $330 (plus 11% tax). Reservations can be made by calling 671-969-5200. ***(PR)***

Biden awards $7B for clean hydrogen hubs across US

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Biden administration has selected clean-energy projects from Pennsylvania to California for a $7 billion program to kickstart development and production of hydrogen fuel, a key component of President Joe Biden's agenda to slow climate change.

Biden called clean hydrogen essential to his vision of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S. by 2050. His goal is to establish seven regional hubs to help replace fossil fuels such as coal and oil with cleaner-burning hydrogen as an energy source for vehicles, manufacturing and generating electricity.

The seven hubs, which include projects in 16 states, will spur more than $40 billion in private investment and create tens of thousands of good-paying jobs, many of them union positions, Biden said Friday at a cargo terminal in Philadelphia, where one of the hubs will be based.

He called the announcement transformational and said it would help create "a stronger, energy-secure economy" and combat "the existential threat of climate change."

"It's all part of my plan to make things in America," he said.

The projects selected are based in California, Washington, Minnesota, Texas, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Illinois. All but the California and Texas hubs include projects in multiple states. Pennsylvania has projects in two separate hubs.

The infrastructure law Biden signed in 2021 included billions of dollars to develop so-called clean hydrogen, a technology that industry and clean-energy advocates have long pushed as a way to reduce planet-warming greenhouse gas emissions produced by fossil fuels.

Some environmentalists call hydrogen a false solution because it frequently relies on natural gas as a fuel source.

Energy companies say fossil fuels can by used if the projects capture the carbon dioxide produced and keep it out of the atmosphere, a technology that has yet to be produced at commercial scale.

States and businesses have been competing for federal dollars in the new Energy Department program, which will create regional networks of hydrogen producers, consumers and infrastructure. The intent is to accelerate the availability and use of the colorless, odorless gas that already powers some vehicles and trains.

Among those selected were the Appalachian Regional Clean Hydrogen Hub, based in West Virginia, and the Philadelphia-based Mid-Atlantic Clean Hydrogen Hub. Pennsylvania, a battleground state of the highest importance to the Democratic president in next year's election, is in line to benefit from both projects.

Biden has made Philadelphia a regular stop for both official and campaign events, and partners in the proposed Philadelphia-area hub have labor unions that are key Biden supporters. The West Virginia-based hub includes major Pittsburgh-based natural gas companies that are active in the region's prolific Marcellus Shale reservoir, including natural gas producer EQT Corp., which expects its gas to flow through the controversial Mountain Valley Pipeline in West Virginia and Virginia.

Sen. Joe Manchin, a West Virginia Democrat who muscled approval of the $6.6 billion pipeline through Congress in an unusual agreement with the White House this year, hailed the Appalachian hub.

"This means West Virginia will be the new epicenter of hydrogen in the United States of America," he said of the hub, which will receive up to $925 million in federal spending. "West Virginia will be on the leading edge of building out the new hydrogen market."

The Appalachian hub will extend to Ohio and includes a $1.6 billion facility under construction in northern Pennsylvania that is working to produce near-zero emissions hydrogen from natural gas.

"This is a big, big deal for ... Appalachia in particular, because these facilities are all based in areas where coal was king," said Perry Babb, president of KeyState, an owner and developer of the Pennsylvania site.

The Mid-Atlantic hub, which includes New Jersey and Delaware, will receive $750 million and will make hydrogen through electrolysis—splitting water molecules using renewable energy sources such as wind and solar power, as well as nuclear power.

The two largest projects are in California and Texas; each will receive up to $1.2 billon.

EU warns China European public could turn more protectionist if trade deficit isn't reduced

BEIJING (AP)—The European Union's top foreign policy official warned Friday that public sentiment in Europe could turn more protectionist if the region's trade deficit with China is not reduced.

Josep Borrell, the EU high representative for foreign affairs, called for improved access for European companies that want to export to or invest in China. He said that political leaders in Europe could face pressure from voters to disengage from the world's second-largest economy.

"And we don't want to disengage and much less, much less, to decouple from China," Borrell said in a speech at Peking University, one of China's top schools.

The EU trade deficit with China topped $17 billion in September, bringing the total for the first nine months of the year to $170 billion, according to Chinese trade figures released Friday.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi acknowledged the European Union's concerns after talks with Borrell later Friday.

"China attaches importance to the economic and trade concerns of the European side and is willing to further deepen reform and opening up and provide a more favorable environment for EU enterprises to operate in China," he said at a joint news conference with his European counterpart.

Wang said the Chinese side had also expressed concern about a recently launched EU investigation into subsidies for the Chinse electric vehicle industry. "We urge the EU to avoid protectionist behavior and be prudent in the use of trade remedy measures," he said.

Borrell is the latest EU official to visit China as the two sides lay the groundwork for a leaders summit later this year. Energy Commissioner Kadri Simson is in Beijing this week and Economy and Trade Commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis came last month.

Nation

AS FAMILY MEMBERS IN GAZA STRUGGLE TO STAY ALIVE

Palestinian Americans could only watch in dread

AP
Demonstrators march during a pro-Palestinian protest, Saturday, Oct. 14, 2023, in Los Angeles.

NEW YORK (AP)—For the unforeseeable future, Laila El-Haddad has one mission: to get the voices of her fellow Palestinians, along with their pleas for help, out to the rest of the world.

From her home office in Columbia, Maryland, El-Haddad frantically juggled phone calls this week from journalists seeking her expertise on Gaza and Palestinian Americans trying to get the attention of their local elected officials.

In between the calls, the 45-year-old mother and author checked WhatsApp, the global messaging application, for updates from her own family members in Gaza during their brief windows of electricity and internet access. Electricity was since cut off by Israel and internet outages have made it difficult for many to keep in touch.

"I'm just trying to stay sane by doing what I can to help," El-Haddad said.

For many Palestinian Americans, there's a sense of helplessness and hopelessness as they struggle to hear from loved ones in Gaza. Amid a fuel and water shortage, no electricity, and now a forced evacuation in the north, administering and sending aid to civilians in Gaza is near impossible.

Israel has bombarded Gaza with airstrikes for days and has threatened a ground invasion in response to Hamas' attack on Israel that killed 1,300 last weekend. The Gaza Health Ministry said Saturday that over 2,200 people have been killed in the besieged territory in the last several days, including 724 children and 458 women. With a looming humanitarian crisis, that number is expected to rise.

But even before this week, getting to Gaza to visit family for Palestinian Americans was a lengthy, exhausting and difficult experience, and most people who live Gaza can never leave. Unlike Israeli Americans, Palestinian Americans say they have never been afforded the opportunity to freely help their loved ones in times of crisis.

Mohammad AbuLughod, who lives in a suburb of Milwaukee, received fragmented updates from a cell phone his family in Gaza kept charged via a solar panel. His family shared those messages with The Associated Press:

An elder in the family died from an airstrike. They tried to seek shelter in a United Nations school, before deciding to stay home. Schools were damaged by airstrikes. Children died. Buildings have been reduced to rubble. They don't know if the neighbors are alive. They are all gathered now, three generations, in one house. When the bombs come, they will die together. No one will have to live alone.

"I feel I am living in a nightmare," one relative wrote in a message to the family.

AbuLughod is at a loss for what to do. "There's no way to send support, we can't send them money and money would probably be useless, because there's nothing to buy," he said.

Deanna Othman's young nephew in Gaza messaged her on Instagram to say it may be the last time he's able to talk to her.

"How do you reply to that?" Othman, who lives in a suburb of Chicago, said in an interview with the AP. "How can you say anything to comfort someone who is facing their own mortality?"

Haneen Okal, a Palestinian American living in New Jersey, is currently stuck in Gaza with her three young children. She'd gone to Gaza while pregnant, after 9 years away to visit her family, and planned to travel back to New Jersey to deliver her baby. But after experiencing a medical emergency, she delivered her baby in Gaza in August, and has remained there since.

Minutes before she was set to leave Gaza through the Rafah crossing with Egypt earlier this week, Israeli airstrikes left the crossing inoperable. She and her children traveled back to the Rafah crossing on Saturday in the hopes that the U.S. government would allow for their safe evacuation. So far, she said, State Department officials have not told her if they will help her leave. Abdulla, Okal's husband, is pleading with the U.S. government from New Jersey to bring his family home.

The toll of heat deaths in Phoenix area soars after hottest summer on record

PHOENIX (AP)—The toll of heat-associated deaths in Arizona's most populous county—still being tallied after the area's hottest summer ever recorded—has soared over 360, alarming public health officials who say the final count will surely set a new record.

Maricopa County, the hottest metropolitan area in the U.S. and home to Phoenix, reported this week that 361 heat-associated deaths have been confirmed this year as of Oct. 7. Another 238 deaths remained under investigation.

As of the same time last year, 331 heat-associated deaths had been confirmed, with another 126 deaths still being studied. No other major metropolitan area in the U.S. has reported such high figures or spends so much time tracking and studying them.

"It definitely looks like we'll see more deaths than last year and maybe even more than 500," said Dr. Rebecca Sunenshine, medical director for Maricopa County Public Health. "But we won't really know until the end of the season."

Maricopa County set an annual record last year with 425 heat-associated deaths confirmed.

This summer, Phoenix experienced the hottest three months since record-keeping began in 1895, including the hottest July and the second-hottest August. The daily average temperature of 97 F (36.1 C) in June, July and August passed the previous record of 96.7 F (35.9 C) set three years ago.

Phoenix also set a record in July with a 31-day streak of highs at or above 110 F (43.3 C).

Sunenshine said Maricopa County began tracking heat-associated deaths in 2005, then gradually began collecting additional information, including the age, sex, race and ethnicity of those who died and whether they were indoors or outside when they got sick.

Investigators also began noting whether those who died inside had an air conditioner, whether it was working and whether there was electricity to power it. Sunenshine said collecting that kind of information has led to rules requiring regulated power companies to keep the electricity running during hot spells even if the bills haven't been paid.

"It's really important to know the circumstances around these deaths," Sunenshine said. "It can lead to policy changes."

The number of people dying from heat-related causes has risen not only in the Phoenix area, but across the U.S. and around the world as climate change makes heat waves more frequent, intense and enduring.

Counting such deaths can take months of investigation, including toxicological tests, to determine whether heat was a contributing factor in someone's death. The deaths Maricopa County tallies include ones that were the direct result of high temperatures, such as heatstroke, as well as ones in which heat was a contributing factor, such as a heart attack provoked by the hot weather.

Approximately three-fourths of the heat-associated deaths in Maricopa County so far this year year were outside. About 44% of those who died were people experiencing homelessness in a county where an estimated 10,000 don't have permanent housing. More than a third of all the people who died were 65 or older.

There have been 89 indoor heat deaths in the county confirmed so far, mostly in homes where the air conditioning was not working or turned off.

Republicans pick Jim Jordan as nominee for House speaker

WASHINGTON (AP)—Republicans chose firebrand Rep. Jim Jordan as their new nominee for House speaker during internal voting Friday, putting the gavel within reach of the staunch ally of GOP presidential front-runner Donald Trump.

Electing Jordan, a founding member of the Freedom Caucus, to the powerful position second in line to the presidency would move the GOP's far right into a central seat of U.S. power. A groundswell of high-profile backers including Fox News' Sean Hannity publicly pressured lawmakers to vote Jordan into the speaker's office after the stunning ouster of Kevin McCarthy.

Jordan, of Ohio, will now try to unite colleagues from the deeply divided House GOP majority ahead of a public vote on the floor, possibly next week. Republicans split 124-81 in Friday's private vote, though a second secret ballot nudged his tally higher.

"I think Jordan would do a great job," McCarthy, R-Calif., said ahead of the vote. "We got to get this back on track."

Frustrated House Republicans have been fighting bitterly over whom they should elect to replace McCarthy to lead their party after his unprecedented ouster by a handful of hardliners. The stalemate between the factions, now in its second week, has thrown the House into chaos, grinding all other business to a halt. Lawmakers left for the weekend, and are due back Monday.

Attention swiftly turned to Jordan, the Judiciary Committee chairman and founder of the far-right Freedom Caucus, after Majority Leader Steve Scalise abruptly ended his bid when it became clear holdouts would refuse to back his nomination.

But not all Republicans want to see Jordan as speaker.

Jordan is known for his close alliance with Trump, particularly when the then-president was working to overturn the results of the 2020 election, leading to the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol.

His rise would all but complete the far-rightward shift of the party, and boost its defense of Trump in four separate legal cases, including over 2020 election fraud. During Trump's impeachment proceedings over the Jan. 6 attack, Jordan was his chief defender in Congress. Trump awarded him the Medal of Freedom days later.

World

Gaza's desperate civilians flee or huddle in hopes of safety

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP)—Desperate Palestinians scrambled for escape from northern Gaza on Saturday or huddled by the thousands at a hospital in the target zone in hopes it would be spared, as Israel intensified warnings of an imminent offensive by air, ground and sea following Hamas militants' deadly rampage in Israel a week ago.

» As warnings of Israeli offensive mount

While workers at an Israeli military base continued efforts through the Jewish Sabbath to identify the more than 1,300 people killed in the Oct. 7 assault, Israel dropped leaflets from the air and redoubled warnings on social media for more than 1 million Gaza residents to move south.

The military says it is trying to clear away civilians ahead of a concentrated campaign against Hamas militants in the north, including in what it said were underground hideouts in Gaza City. Hamas urged people to stay in their homes.

The U.N. and aid groups say such a rapid exodus along with Israel's siege of the territory would cause untold human suffering. The World Health Organization said the evacuation "could be tantamount to a death sentence" for the more than 2,000 patients in northern hospitals, including newborns in incubators and people in intensive care.

Gaza's humanitarian crisis already was mounting Saturday amid a growing shortage of water and medical supplies under a week-old Israeli blockade, which has also forced electrical plants to shut down without fuel.

In Gaza City, Haifa Khamis al-Shurafa crowded into a car with six family members, fleeing to the south in the darkness.

"We don't deserve this," Shurafa said, before leaving her home city. "We didn't kill anyone."

The evacuation directive covers an area of 1.1 million residents, or about half the territory's population. The Israeli military said "hundreds of thousands" of Palestinians had heeded the warning and headed south. It gave Palestinians a six-hour window that ended Saturday afternoon to travel safely within Gaza along two main routes.

In Israel, meanwhile, workers at a military base received special rabbinical approval to continue identifying bodies of the more than 1,300 people, most civilians, killed by Hamas. Work is normally halted on Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited Be'eri and Kfar Azza, two southern border communities where Hamas militants slaughtered dozens of Israelis, to meet with soldiers and tour the ruins of bloodied homes. Netanyahu has faced criticism that his government has not done enough to meet with relatives of the victims.

Hundreds of relatives of the scores of Israelis and foreigners captured by Hamas and taken to Gaza gathered outside the Israeli Defense Ministry in Tel Aviv, demanding their release.

"This is my cry out to the world: Please help bring my family, my wife and three kids," said Avihai Brodtz of Kfar Azza. Many expressed anger toward the government, saying they still have no information about their loved ones.

In a nationally broadcast address Saturday night, Israel's chief military spokesman, Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, accused Hamas of trying to use civilians as human shields and issued a new appeal to Gaza residents to move south.

In 1st call with Palestinian president Abbas, Biden discusses support for humanitarian aid to Gaza

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia (AP)—President Joe Biden on Saturday spoke with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, urging the leaders to allow humanitarian aid to the region and affirmed his support for efforts to protect civilians.

The weekend calls in Washington came ahead of Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin's announcement that the U.S. was moving up a second carrier strike group in support of Israel. Secretary of State Antony Blinken intensified diplomatic outreach across the Middle East and beyond to rally an international response to prevent the Israel-Hamas war from expanding.

The broad U.S. efforts reflect the international concern about the number of civilians at risk and the potential ramifications of a prolonged war as Israel told Gaza residents to move south and Hamas urged people to remain in their homes. The Biden administration has not publicly urged Israel to restrain its response after the Hamas attack a week ago, but has emphasized the country's commitment to following the rules of war.

Addressing a Human Rights Campaign dinner Saturday in Washington, Biden linked the humanitarian crisis in Gaza to different versions of hate that he said must be stopped.

"A week ago we saw hate manifest another way in the worst massacre of the Jewish people since the Holocaust," Biden said, citing the 1,300 lives lost in Israel as well as "children, grandparents alike kidnapped, held hostage by Hamas."

"The humanitarian crisis in Gaza—innocent Palestinian families and the vast majority that have nothing to do with Hamas—they're being used as human shields," he said. "We have to reject hate in every form."

Blinken met with Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan in Riyadh before stopping in the United Arab Emirates as he sought ways to help civilians trapped in between the fighting and to address the growing humanitarian crisis.

He also called his Chinese counterpart as Palestinians struggled to flee from areas of Gaza targeted by the Israeli military before an expected land offensive.

Fierce fighting persists in Ukraine's east as Kyiv reports nonstop assaults by Russia on key city

KYIV, Ukraine (AP)—Ukrainian officials reported intense combat as Russian forces relentlessly assaulted the eastern Ukrainian city of Avdiivka for a fifth consecutive day Saturday.

City leader Vitalii Barabash reported that Moscow was deploying additional forces to encircle the strategically important city in the eastern Donetsk region, situated just north of the Russian-held regional capital, also called Donetsk.

"The enemy hasn't stopped either assaulting or shelling positions" around Avdiivka, Barabash said on Ukrainian television.

Around 1,600 civilians remain within the city, a stark contrast to its prewar population of about 31,000. Russian President Vladimir Putin launched his war against Ukraine in February 2022.

Barabash's comments came after Russia's U.N. ambassador, Vassily Nebenzia, told a U.N. Security Council meeting on Friday that the intensified attacks in the east amounted to a new stage in Moscow's campaign in Ukraine.

"Russian troops have, for several days now, switched over to active combat action practically throughout the entire front line. The so-called Ukrainian counteroffensive can therefore be considered finished," he said.

But Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said earlier this week that Ukrainian forces were keeping Russian troops at bay and "holding our ground."

Donetsk's acting regional governor, Ihor Moroz, said Saturday that 22 civilians were wounded in Russian shelling in the region over the previous 24 hours.

Further north, fighting along the northern stretch of Ukraine's eastern front has "significantly worsened" in recent days, Gen. Oleksandr Syrskyi, commander of Ukraine's land forces, wrote on Facebook Saturday.

Syrskyi, who visited troops in the area, said that Russian forces had regrouped following losses and were mounting attacks around the village of Makiivka and pushing toward the city of Kupiansk, with the goal of encircling Kupiansk and reaching the Oskil River.

Also on Saturday, two women—ages 60 and 42—were killed in two Russian shelling attacks in the city of Beryslav in Ukraine's partly-occupied Kherson region.

†Edwina Igitol Taitano-Ngotel

Lovingly known as
"Wina"
Born to life on
NOVEMBER 11, 1961
Called to Eternal life on
SEPTEMBER 30, 2023

In her new Life, Wina will be met at the gates of Heaven by her:

Husband: Willard O. Ngotel

Parents: Jose Esteves and Maria Igitol Taitano
Parents-in-Law: Otong and Marie Ngotel
Sisters/Brothers/In-Laws: Teresa I. Taitano
Augustine I./Rita S. Taitano
Escolastica I. Taitano-Iguel
Joaquin I. Taitano
Victorino N. Igitol
Nominada L./Rafael Kosaka
Martin I./Dionicia M. Lifoifoi
Ursula I. Lifoifoi-Aldan
David L./Lydia D. Igitol

Her loving memories will forever live in the hearts of her:

Brothers/Sisters/In-Laws: Francisco (Boy) I./Victoria K. Taitano & Children
Sylvestre I. Iguel & Children
Jocelyn M. Taitano & Children
Alice S. Igitol & Children
Francisco DLG. Aldan & Children
Pedro J.L./Mathilde C. Igitol & Children
Delfina I. Russell & Children
Martin L./Marlyn U. Igitol & Children
Leonisa I./Ken Kato
Rose L. Igitol/Antonio Rogolifoi & Children
Wilbur/Lourdes I. Ngotel & Children

Children: Wilton/Crystal Ngotel & Children
Waldron/Sabrina Ngotel & Children

She will be missed by numerous reared children, nephews, nieces, cousins, aunts, uncles, and friends.

On Tuesday, October 17, 2023, at 8:00 a.m. she will be escorted from her home to the Bithen Delos Remedios Church in Tanapag. Last respects will begin immediately after the Rosary. Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 11:00 a.m. and then our beloved †Wina will be laid to rest along her husband †Willard at the Tanapag Public Cemetery.

Your thoughts, prayers, words of comfort and presence are sincerely appreciated.

Si Yu'us Ma'ase, Ghilisou, Saghashigshig and Thank you.

The Family

Health & Wellness

Why you and your family need a flu shot

By DEB BALZER
Mayo Clinic News Network

If you haven't had the flu in a few years, there's a reason. As Dr. Nipunie Rajapakse, a pediatric infectious diseases physician with the Mayo Clinic Children's Center, shares, all the more reason to ensure you and your family are vaccinated this year.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that everyone 6 months and older get a flu shot. And make it a goal to be vaccinated by the end of October.

"We know that our population-level immunity to influenza is lower than usual because we've had lower rates during the COVID times," says Rajapakse.

Public health measures during the pandemic—wearing masks, washing hands and social distancing—not only help reduce COVID-19 transmission but also lowered the spread of the flu.

DREAMSTIME

Flu shots are recommended for anyone older than six months.

"Fewer people have had influenza infection and illness. They don't have the antibodies from that experience. We're all the more dependent on the antibodies from vaccination to protect us in that situation," she says.

Why get a flu shot

Rajapakse says getting vaccinated is an important way to build immunity and prevent infection.

"And so the recommendations still remain that anyone over six months of age should get an influenza vaccine this year," she says.

This is especially true of young children, older adults and those with weakened immune systems who are at higher risk of severe illness due to the flu.

"People's protection is going to come from vaccination rather than recent infection. And that makes it all the more important to get the vaccine," says Rajapakse.

Who should get flu shot

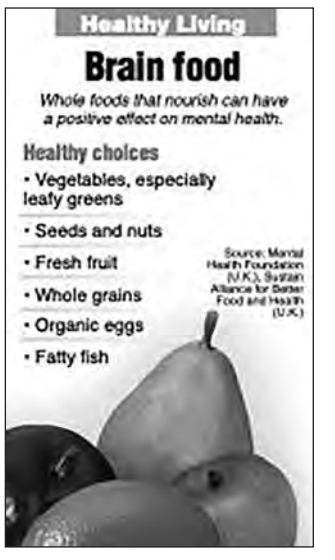
Everyone aged six months and older should get a yearly flu vaccine. It's especially important for those at a higher risk of severe flu complications.

Those at higher risk of complications from flu include:

- Young children under age 2.
- Adults older than age 65.
- Residents of nursing homes and other long-term care facilities.
- People who are pregnant or plan to be pregnant during flu season.
- People with weakened immune systems.
- American Indians or Alaska Natives.
- People with chronic illnesses, such as asthma, heart disease, kidney disease, liver disease and diabetes.

Getting the flu shot has important benefits. It reduces flu cases, doctor visits, missed work and school days due to flu, and lessens symptom severity, lowering flu-related hospitalizations and deaths.

Along with vaccination, practicing good hand hygiene and avoiding people who are ill are ways to prevent transmission and illness.


Healthy Living
Brain food
Whole foods that nourish can have a positive effect on mental health.
Healthy choices
• Vegetables, especially leafy greens
• Seeds and nuts
• Fresh fruit
• Whole grains
• Organic eggs
• Fatty fish
Source: Mental Health Foundation (U.K.), Sustain: Alliance for Better Food and Health (U.K.)

Understanding mental health and mental illness

By LAUREL KELLY
Mayo Clinic News Network

Mental health is the overall wellness of how you think, regulate your feelings and behave. A mental disorder may be present when patterns or changes in thinking, feeling or behavior cause distress or disrupt a person's ability to function.

Cultural norms and social expectations also play a role in defining mental health. There is no standard measure across cultures to determine whether a behavior is normal or when it becomes disruptive. What might be normal in one society may be a cause for concern in another.

Mental illness refers to a wide range of mental health conditions — disorders that affect your mood, thinking and behavior. Many people have mental health concerns from time to time. But a mental health concern becomes a mental illness when ongoing signs and symptoms cause frequent stress and affect your ability to function. About 1 in 5 adults has a mental illness in any given year, and mental illness can begin at any age.

Examples of mental illness include:

- Depression.
- Anxiety disorders.
- Schizophrenia.
- Eating disorders.
- Addictive behaviors.

MORE INFORMATION

If you think your teen or someone you know may hurt themselves or attempt suicide, get help right away by taking one of these actions:

- Call your mental health specialist.
- Call a crisis hotline number. In the U.S., call or text 988 to reach the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline 24/7. Or use Lifeline Chat. Services are free and confidential. U.S. veterans or service members who are in crisis can call 988 and press "1" for the Veterans Crisis Line, text 838255 or chat online.The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline in the U.S. also has a Spanish-language phone line at 888-628-9454.
- Call 911 or your local emergency number.
- Seek help from your healthcare professional.
- Reach out to a close friend or loved one.
- Contact a minister, spiritual leader or someone else in your faith community. ***(Mayo Clinic News Network)***

Access to mental health treatment is an important part of overall healthcare services. It's also important to understand the roles of different types of mental health specialists to find the one that fits your needs. The best choice for your care will depend on your concern or condition; whether you need medications, counseling or both; and your health insurance coverage. Finding the right match is crucial to establishing a good relationship and getting the most out of your treatment.

Treatment depends on the type of mental illness, its severity and what works best for you. In many cases, a combination of treatments may be recommended. If you have a mild mental illness with well-controlled symptoms, treatment from your primary health care professional may be sufficient. However, often a team approach is appropriate to make sure all your psychiatric, medical and social needs are met.

Unfortunately, negative attitudes and beliefs toward people who have a mental health condition are common. Others' judgments almost always stem from a lack of understanding rather than information based on facts. Learn more about the stigma of mental illness and what you can do to cope.

Connect with others talking about mental health in the Mental Health Support Group on Mayo Clinic Connect, an online patient community moderated by Mayo Clinic.

Breast health during menopause

By DEB BALZER
Mayo Clinic News Network

Your risk of breast cancer increases with age, especially after menopause. Around 8 out of 10 breast cancer cases happen in women over 50.

Dr. Stephanie Faubion, director of the Mayo Clinic Center for Women's Health and director of the Menopause Society, says maintaining breast health is important, including regular mammography screenings.

It's common to experience breast changes during perimenopause or menopause.

"We sometimes have shoots in our estrogen levels, so that can cause some breast tenderness. Typically, our density in the breast tends to decrease a little bit with menopause because we lose estrogen," says Faubion.

She says some age-related breast changes are normal, and ongoing breast care is vital.

"It's important to remember when you're in menopause to continue with breast cancer screening just as when you were premenopausal," Faubion says.

It's recommended to start regular breast cancer screening at age 40.

"We recommend mammography every year. There are also women with increased breast density, and we recommend supplemental screening for those women," she says.

Faubion says 50% of women in the U.S. have dense breasts.

"It's important to communicate with your healthcare team about what the best options for you might be to do some extra screening if you fall in that category," says Faubion.

Reduce risks of breast cancer, optimize breast health

Some risk factors for breast and ovarian cancer, like age, reproductive history and genetics (such as family history or BRCA gene changes), can't be changed. However, making certain lifestyle changes may help lower your risks.

How to reduce risks of breast cancer:

- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Get regular exercise.
- Limit alcohol consumption.

For more on ensuring breast health, talk with your healthcare team to find other ways to reduce your risks and when breast cancer screening is right for you.

Dr. Stephanie Faubion, medical editor of The New Rules of Menopause, is one of the nation's leading experts on menopause and regularly treats women with menopausal concerns.

Life & Style

Hollywood studios break off strike talks with actors' union

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Talks bitterly broke off between Hollywood actors and studios late Wednesday, killing any hopes that the three-month strike by performers would come to an end anytime soon.

The studios announced that they had suspended contract negotiations, saying the gap between the two sides was too great to make continuing worth it, despite an offer they said was as good as the one that recently ended the writers strike. The actors union decried their opponents' "bullying tactics" and said they were wildly mischaracterizing their offers.

"We made big moves in their direction that have just been ignored and not responded to," Duncan Crabtree-Ireland, the national executive director and chief negotiator for the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists had resumed negotiations, told The Associated Press on a Los Angeles picket line Thursday. "We're not going to find a solution to this if they just leave and don't talk to us."

On Oct. 2, for the first time since the strike began July 14, SAG-AFTRA had resumed negotiations with the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers, which represents studios, streaming services and production companies in strike talks.

When negotiations resumed with writers last month, their strike ended five days later, but similar progress was not made with the actors union.

The studios walked away from talks after seeing the actors' most recent proposal on Wednesday.

"It is clear that the gap between the AMPTP and SAG-AFTRA is too great, and conversations are no longer moving us in a productive direction," the AMPTP said in a statement.

The SAG-AFTRA proposal would cost companies an additional $800 million a year and create "an untenable economic burden," the statement said.

In a letter to members sent early Thursday, SAG-AFTRA said that figure was overestimated by 60%.

"We went into those rooms with our own open mind and a goal of establishing a dialogue with those CEOs. We were very happy they were there because here are ultimate decision-makers who have the power to say yes," Crabtree-Ireland said. "We gave them a full set of counter-proposals yesterday. We made changes to our AI proposal. We made dramatic changes to what used to be our streaming revenue share proposal. We took it out of revenue share completely at their insistence."

The union said its negotiators were "profoundly disappointed" the studios had broken off talks.

"We have negotiated with them in good faith," the letter read, "despite the fact that last week they presented an offer that was, shockingly, worth less than they proposed before the strike began."

Actors have been on strike over issues including increases in pay for streaming programming and control of the use of their images generated by artificial intelligence.

The AMPTP insisted its offers had been as generous as the deals that brought an end to the writers strike and brought a new contract to the directors guild earlier this year.

But the union letter to actors said the companies "refuse to protect performers from being replaced by AI, they refuse to increase your wages to keep up with inflation, and they refuse to share a tiny portion of the immense revenue YOUR work generates for them."

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Louvre Museum and Versailles Palace evacuated after bomb threats with France on alert

PARIS (AP)—The Louvre Museum in Paris and Versailles Palace evacuated visitors and staff Saturday after receiving bomb threats, police said. The French government started deploying 7,000 troops to increase security around the country after a fatal school stabbing by a suspected Islamic extremist. The evacuations of two of the world's most-visited tourist sites come amid heightened vigilance around France following Friday's school attack, and global tensions linked to the war between Israel and Hamas. President Emmanuel Macron's government is worried about fallout from the war in France. Alarms rang out through the Louvre when the evacuation was announced, and in the underground shopping center beneath its signature pyramid. Paris police said officers searched the museum after it received written bomb threats. The Louvre communication service said no one was hurt and no bomb was found, so the museum will reopen as usual on Sunday. The Louvre, home to masterpieces such as the Mona Lisa, welcomes between 30,000 and 40,000 visitors per day and several million annually.

LeVar Burton will host National Book Awards ceremony, replacing Drew Barrymore

NEW YORK (AP)—LeVar Burton will host next month's National Book Awards ceremony, replacing the original choice, Drew Barrymore, who was dropped because of her decision to resume taping of her show during the writers' strike. The National Book Foundation, which presents the awards, announced Burton's selection Friday. Burton, a longtime advocate for reading known for his roles in the TV miniseries "Roots" and in "Star Trek: The Next Generation," also hosted the ceremony in 2019. "It's an honor to return as host of the biggest night for books, especially in a moment when the freedom to read is at risk and literature both needs and deserves our recognition and support," said Burton, who earlier this month served as honorary chair of Banned Books Week, when stores and libraries highlight works that have been challenged or censored. The National Book Awards will take place at Cipriani Wall Street in New York City on Nov. 15, when winners will be announced in five competitive categories. Oprah Winfrey will be a guest speaker and poet Rita Dove will receive a lifetime achievement medal.

Man admits stealing 'Wizard of Oz' ruby slippers from museum in 2005, but details remain a mystery

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—A man charged in the museum heist of a pair of ruby slippers that Judy Garland wore in the "The Wizard of Oz" pleaded guilty Friday in a deal that could keep him out of prison due to his failing health, but only cleared up some of the mystery that dates back 18 years. Terry Jon Martin, 76, pleaded guilty to a single count of theft of a major artwork. The shoes were stolen in 2005 from the Judy Garland Museum in the late actor's hometown of Grand Rapids, Minnesota, and recovered by the FBI in 2018. No one was arrested until Martin, who lives near Grand Rapids, was charged this year. During his change-of-plea hearing in federal court in Duluth, Martin said he used a hammer to smash the glass of the museum door and display case to take the slippers. He said he thought the slippers had real rubies and that he had hoped to sell the gems. But when a fence told him the rubies were glass, he said he got rid of the slippers.

PHASE-OUT AP

Shoppers are silhouetted as they walk toward a Best Buy store after doors opened at 5 a.m., Nov. 26, 2021, in Lone Tree, Colo. Best Buy is saying goodbye to movie-watching with physical discs. The consumer electronics retailer plans to phase out its DVD and Blu-ray sales by early 2024—with physical movies set to be sold in-stores and online as they are today through the holidays.

Boyfriend still dragging feet on getting married

DEAR ABBY: I have been with my man for seven years and I keep asking him when we're getting married. He said we would—"someday." Then COVID came along. Now he says after the pandemic is completely over. He has admitted he's scared to get married again because he doesn't want to be hurt like he was when his ex cheated on him. I told him I'm not like her. He says he knows that, and I'm the kindest, sweetest woman he's ever met.

I love this man with all my heart. We get along fine. I have my wedding dress and shoes. I'm tired of his excuses. I'm almost ready to say the heck with it and sell my dress and shoes. Should I? Please give me some advice.

NEVER A BRIDE IN NEW ENGLAND

DEAR NEVER A BRIDE: The COVID problem, with the many variants that keep cropping up, is likely to be with us for the foreseeable future. Tell your reluctant bridegroom you love him, but seven years is enough time for him to decide whether he wants to be married to you. You don't need a special dress and shoes to accomplish that, just a heart full of love and a willing partner. A visit to the courthouse is all that's required. If he still isn't willing to set a date, and being married is what you need, then it's time to move on.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I am a divorced woman. My fiance, "Keith," is a widower. My two younger children have accepted and love him. My oldest daughter is slowly coming around. However, Keith's adult adopted sons and daughter are making it hard. One son has refused to have any contact with his father since his mom's death three years ago. The other son and daughter have been causing A LOT of pain because of their hatred toward Keith and me.

Keith and I argue more now, and I'm so overwhelmed and stressed that I'm often in tears. What can I do to get his son and daughter off our case? We have known each other more than 20 years and have been a couple for a year and a half.

UNACCEPTED IN MISSOURI

DEAR UNACCEPTED: There is nothing you can do to change the attitudes of your fiance's adult children. You can, however, stay out of the line of fire. I wish you had mentioned what caused the hard feelings from Keith's children. Could they think you and Keith were romantically involved before his wife's death?

Because this is causing the two of you so much stress and pain that it's affecting your relationship, ask your physician to refer you to a licensed marriage and family therapist to help you both through this very unpleasant patch.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: What should I do when another married woman hugs my husband every time she sees him?

BOTHERED IN FLORIDA

DEAR BOTHERED: If you complain to the woman, you risk being perceived as possessive and insecure. Ideally, your husband should tell her (privately) that he would appreciate it if she was less effusive when she sees him because it makes HIM uncomfortable.

■ ■ ■

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

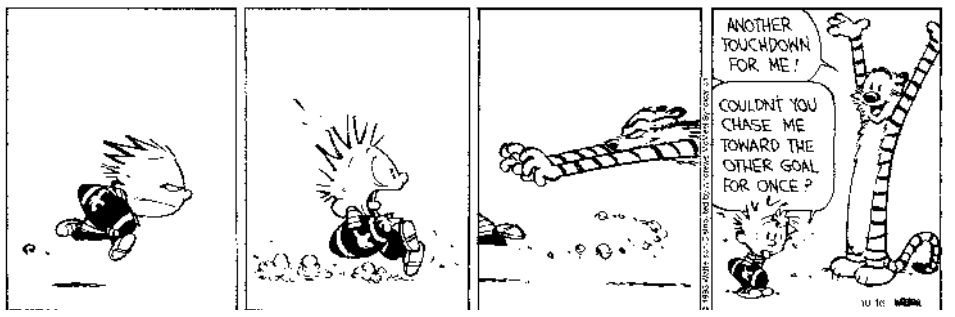
By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

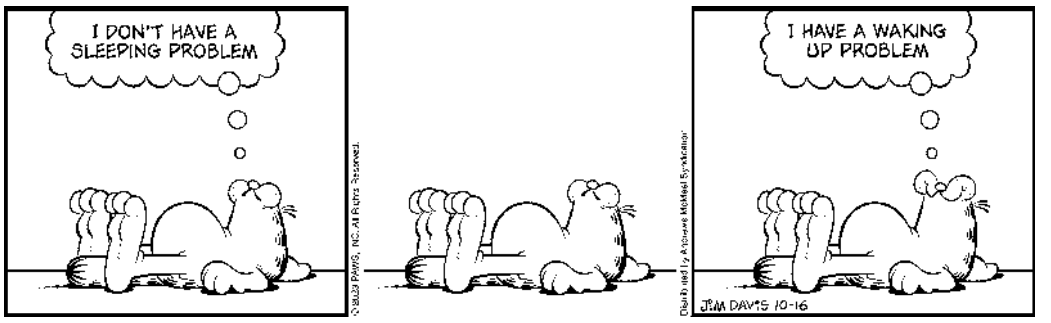
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



Garfield®

By Jim Davis



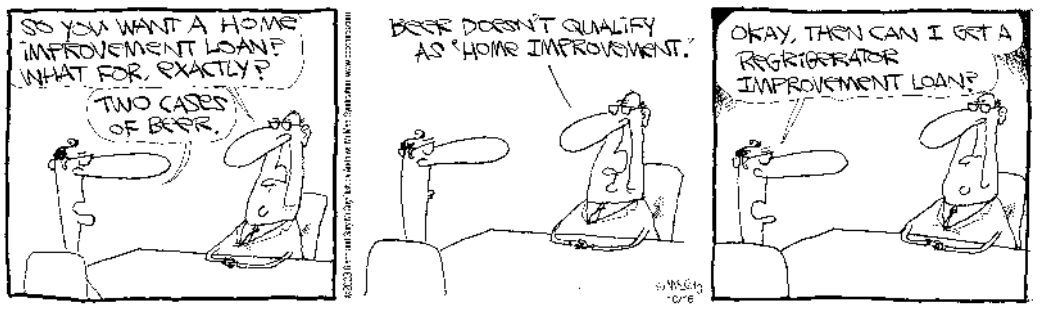
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

CLAYTON, TIME TO GET UP.
PLEASE, CALL ME ULAD.
TIME TO GET UP, ULAD.
THE SUN'S RAYS, ZEY VILL DESTROY ME.
SO VILL BEING LATE FOR SCHOOL.
HISSS!
NO MORE SLEEPING IN YOUR FANGS, ULAD.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


SO YOU WANT A HOME IMPROVEMENT LOAN? WHAT FOR, EXACTLY?
TWO CASES OF BEER.
BEER DOESN'T QUALIFY AS 'HOME IMPROVEMENT.'
OKAY, THEN CAN I GET A REFRIGERATOR IMPROVEMENT LOAN?

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Binge
4 Greek leader?
9 Nursery cry
12 Top card
13 Reacts to yeast
14 In the style of
15 Dairy aisle purchase
17 Texter's "Enough!"
18 Blackbird
19 One-dimensional
21 "Who cares?"
24 — about (circa)
25 Ecol. watchdog
26 Matching pair
28 Flexible green toy
31 Jazz phrase
33 — Moines
35 Logical
36 Confuse
38 Obama-care initialism
40 Actor McKellen
41 Rock drummer Ulrich
43 "Ironic" singer Moris-sette
45 Wild cat
47 Org. with a style manual
48 Hit hard
49 Madame Tus-saud's gallery
54 Brit. record label
55 Dwelled
56 Enjoy Aspen
57 Tex- — cuisine
58 Dis-paraging
59 For each

DOWN

1 Mouth part
2 German cry
3 Earth (Pref.)
4 Sports venues
5 Like some editions
6 "— Love You" (Beatles hit)
7 "Greet-ings!"
8 Making inquiries
9 Major pipe
10 Mater lead-in
11 Locks
16 — -di-dah
20 We, to Pierre
21 Belgrade resident
22 May-berry tyke
23 Break-fast-making conve-nience
27 Herbal brew
29 — B'rith
30 Longings
32 Baby horse
34 De-frauded
37 Stomach sounds
39 Refer (to)
42 Laundry woe
44 Small batteries
45 Utah city
46 Arrived
50 Roman 16
51 "Sixth sense"
52 Guitar's kin
53 Old space station

Solution time: 21 mins.

P	A	M		E	B	B		V	A	L	V	E
U	M	A		C	E	E		A	S	I	A	N
P	I	C		H	A	R	D	S	A	U	C	E
I	N	A		O	U	T	I	F				
L	O	W	S		T	H	E		B	L	A	H
			C	R	Y		S	A	L	I	N	E
S	T	R	A	Y				D	E	N	C	H
A	I	R	B	E	D		G	S	A			
M	O	S	S		D	A	R		K	O	T	B
			S	C	R	A	G		A	I	L	
S	O	F	T	T	O	J	C	H		T	A	O
O	H	A	N	A		B	E	E		E	R	A
G	O	T	I	T		A	D	F		N	A	T

Last Friday's Answer

1	2	3	■	4	5	6	7	8	■	9	10	11
12			■	13					■	14		
15			16						■	17		
■	■	■	18			■	19		20			
21	22	23				■	24				■	■
25			■	26		27	■	28			29	30
31			32	■	33		34	■	35			
36				37	■	38		39	■	40		
■	■	41			42	■	43		44			
45	46					■	47			■	■	■
48			■	49		50				51	52	53
54				55					■	56		
57			■	58					■	59		

STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Kyler Pettis, 31; John Mayer, 46; Kellie Martin, 48; Tim Robbins, 65.

Happy Birthday: Take your time and evaluate where you are and where you see yourself heading. A logical approach to change will be comforting and encourage you to forge ahead confidently. Don't be afraid to ask questions or seek experts to help you avoid mistakes. Challenge yourself to do better and to reach for the stars. Choose to turn this year into a memorable experience. Your numbers are 8, 12, 22, 25, 33, 37, 48.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Be careful not to reveal too much information. Listen to what others say before you contribute to something that makes you hesitant. When in doubt, say no and head in a direction that makes you feel more at home. ✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Explore your options and make your dream a reality. Tweak whatever is necessary to obtain the balance needed to get you where you want to go. Change begins with you, and being mindful of what's happening around you will speed up the process. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* You are ripe for learning or trying something new and exciting. Don't let anyone hold you back or transform you into something you aren't. Speak for and look out for yourself and make it clear who is in control. Protect your health and position. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Do what makes you happy, and refuse to let anyone bait you into a discussion you aren't ready to tackle. A creative interest that incorporates a unique twist on how you use your skills or learning something that can help you advance is favored. ✪✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Speak up and tailor your next move to fit your circumstances. Honesty and integrity will help you avoid someone trying to wrangle you into something that can do you more harm than good. Don't let anger step in when intelligent decisions are necessary. ✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* An upbeat attitude will help you get in the groove. Aim to take care of unfinished business, and catch up with people with beneficial information. What you learn will be valuable when deciding how to handle your cash flow and investments. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Do what makes you feel good about yourself. Be the one to make a difference, put a smile on someone's face and find a way to overcome adversity. Speak from the heart, share your thoughts and choose the most fulfilling path. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Stop procrastinating and start the ball rolling. It's nice to have dreams, but if you don't act when opportunity knocks or make things happen, you'll only have yourself to blame. Use your skills and do what's necessary to reach your goal. Self-improvement is favored. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Use your skills wisely and you'll discover something that inspires you to contribute. The peace you gain helping others will take your mind off what you cannot change. Don't let anyone test your patience or mislead you. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Put more thought into details, perfecting your skills and making opportunities rather than waiting for them to come to you. An aggressive position will give you the strength, courage and originality to bring about worthwhile change. Seize the moment and explore your options. ✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Question everyone and everything. Don't pay for something you can do yourself. Use insight and intelligence regarding money, contracts and medical matters. Don't give in to someone using persuasive tactics or giving you ultimatums. Focus on the truth and do what's best for you. ✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Don't stop if you can accomplish more. Financial gain, negotiations and striving for perfection mentally, physically and financially will pay off. If you have the will, you'll find a way to make your dream come true. Step outside your comfort zone and forge ahead. ✪✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are thoughtful, engaging and fearless. You are helpful and entertaining.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	9			5			2	8
	7	4	1	8				
8				7	6	4	1	9
		7	5		1			6
			7		8			
	5	8						
5		3	8	6	2		7	1
9				1	7	6		4
	1				5	2		

Difficulty: ★ 10/16

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's Answer

4	5	1	6	3	2	9	7	8
8	6	3	7	9	4	2	5	1
7	9	2	5	8	1	3	6	4
2	3	4	9	7	6	8	1	5
9	8	7	3	1	5	6	4	2
6	1	5	2	4	8	7	3	9
3	7	8	1	5	9	4	2	6
5	2	9	4	6	7	1	8	3
1	4	6	8	2	3	5	9	7

Difficulty: ★★★★ 10/14

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

JOSEPH TITO — THE DAD DIARIES Solution: 9 letters

I	B	R	A	N	D	F	A	M	I	L	Y	D	J	I
J	N	L	Ⓟ	Ⓐ	Ⓟ	Ⓐ	R	T	N	E	R	O	R	N
E	B	F	O	I	N	S	P	I	R	E	S	O	A	S
Y	N	E	L	G	T	H	H	O	M	E	T	H	D	T
C	O	M	A	U	S	I	E	O	P	A	G	T	V	A
A	T	E	S	C	E	O	R	H	E	U	A	N	E	G
G	T	R	N	C	H	N	F	R	A	L	M	E	N	R
O	I	P	I	I	K	R	C	V	L	T	I	R	T	A
R	U	U	W	O	A	T	K	E	N	Y	A	A	U	M
R	V	S	T	N	N	F	T	T	R	P	L	P	R	M
U	S	K	C	E	I	S	R	E	R	O	I	A	E	E
S	I	U	T	L	H	A	T	I	S	E	H	Z	T	D
T	U	N	M	O	V	T	A	H	C	L	N	T	Z	I
U	O	S	E	E	N	O	H	P	I	A	A	D	U	A
C	L	S	L	E	R	C	I	T	N	E	H	T	U	A

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Last Friday's Answer: Come On Down

To purchase **WONDERWORD** books, visit www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480. (In Canada, call 1-855-232-2367)

Mahomes throws TD pass as Chiefs beat Broncos, 19-8

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP)—Patrick Mahomes knows the Kansas City Chiefs' offense is still trying to put everything together.

It was evident in the way they struggled against Denver on third down Thursday night. The way they kept getting bottled up in short-yardage situations. And in how they failed time after time to turn red-zone trips into touchdowns.

"Luckily for us," Mahomes said, "our defense is playing great."

So great that Mahomes' lone touchdown pass and Harrison Butker's four field goals were enough to squeak out a 19-8 victory over the Broncos, whose own woeful offense could only manage 197 yards behind a shaky performance from Russell Wilson.

"We have guys that are starters on other teams that are trying to find a way on the football field, and when they get on the field, they're making plays," Mahomes said of the Kansas City defense. "And they're playing with confidence."

AP

Kansas City Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce (87) makes a catch against Denver Broncos' Pat Surtain II (2) during the first half of an NFL football game, Thursday, Oct. 12, 2023, in Kansas City, Mo.

Mahomes finished with 306 yards passing and an interception, and a big chunk of his production went to Travis Kelce, who had nine catches for 124 yards with Taylor Swift again cheering him on from an Arrowhead Stadium suite.

Still, the inability of the Chiefs (5-1) to score touchdowns rather than field goals nearly proved costly.

Butker's first three field goals helped them to a 16-0 lead, but Wilson's touchdown pass to Courtland Sutton — ruled incomplete but overturned upon review — with about six minutes remaining kept the Broncos (1-5) alive. And when Javonte Williams bulled into the end zone for the 2-point conversion, what had been a one-sided shutout was a one-possession game.

The Broncos' league-worst defense couldn't make a stop, though. Mahomes converted third-and-2 with a 28-yard pass to Rashee Rice, and that put Butker in position for a 52-yard field goal with 1:55 left that put the game away.

"Our defense was incredible tonight, as it has been," Chiefs coach Andy Reid said. "But we have to take care of business in the red zone. We had a lot of yards, positive yards, but you can't stall down there."

The Broncos have not beaten the Chiefs since Sept. 17, 2015, the year Peyton Manning led Denver to the Super Bowl. That was six head and interim coaches ago, and nothing changed with Sean Payton leading them Thursday night. In a league built for parity, their losing streak is the fourth-longest for any team against another in NFL history.

"I'm disappointed but I'm not discouraged," Payton said. "Offensively we struggled throwing the ball. Our third-down numbers were poor. The turnovers, against a team like this, it's going to be tough to win the game, and yet we were still in it going into the fourth quarter. Sometimes you don't know how a game is going to unfold."

As bad as the Broncos' defense has been this season, it was Wilson and their offense that kept dragging them down. He had 37 yards passing in the first half, and the only drive Wilson led past midfield ended on fourth down.

The Chiefs weren't doing a whole lot better.

Their first three forays into the red zone netted three points, thanks to an interception by Justin Simmons and a failed tush push out of a field-goal lineup on fourth down. Mahomes, who has struggled by his standards all season, only found his rhythm once in the first half, when he ended a 62-yard drive with a short touchdown pass to Kadarius Toney.

Butker made it 13-0 at the break when he drilled a 60-yard field goal as time expired.

The Chiefs' red-zone woes continued in the second half. They began by swiftly marching downfield and setting up first-and-goal at the Denver 8, but that soon turned into fourth-and-goal at the 7-yard line and Butker had to kick another field goal.

That was all Kansas City could muster until his clinching kick in the final minutes.

Thanks to the defense, that was all the Chiefs needed.

"I thought we did a lot of good things, just obviously red zone and some third downs we didn't execute at a high enough level," Mahomes said. "I still think there were a lot of good things we can take from it."

Swift watched Kelce and the Chiefs for the third time Thursday night. The two began a relationship a few weeks ago, when he invited Swift to a Chiefs game after failing to meet her during her Eras Tour. Swift flew in from Los Angeles, where she walked the red carpet on Wednesday night for the premiere of her concert film.

Chiefs defensive tackle Chris Jones had a sack in his eighth straight regular-season game, which trails only his own 11-game streak in 2018 for the longest in franchise history. With at least one in his first five this season, Jones broke the club record to start the season held by Hall of Famer Derrick Thomas.

Payton, Broncos are still searching for the right chemistry

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. (AP)—Sean Payton is a man in search of his mojo.

Payton never lost five of his first six games during his 15 seasons as the New Orleans Saints coach and the Broncos have never started out worse than the 1-5 record they brought back to Denver after their latest loss to Kansas City.

Payton's play-calling and the Broncos' execution weren't good enough to capitalize on a suddenly stout Denver defense that limited Patrick Mahomes to a single touchdown drive Thursday night.

The result was a 16th consecutive loss to Andy Reid and the Kansas City Chiefs (5-1), this time by a score of 19-8.

Defensive coordinator Vance Joseph has taken plenty of heat with the Broncos dead last in several statistical categories so far, and Payton deserves similar scrutiny after the Broncos' bumbling offensive performance at Arrowhead Stadium on a night the Chiefs seemed ripe for an upset.

Russell Wilson threw for a meager 95 yards, the third-lowest total of his 195 career NFL starts, including playoffs. The only worse outings—77 yards against the Vikings in 2018 and 93 yards against the Cowboys in 2017—both came in Seattle victories.

In 10 drives, the Broncos scored one time, punted five times and turned the ball over twice on interceptions and once each on downs and a fumble.

Receiver Jerry Jeudy, who pranced and preened pregame in a squabble with NFL Network analyst and former Panthers wide receiver Steve Smith Sr., had two catches for 1 yard in the first half and finished with 14 yards on three catches.

That was better than rookie Marvin Mims Jr., by far the Broncos' most productive receiver, who wasn't targeted a single time in Kansas City.

Payton, whose scathing criticisms of his predecessor, Jets offensive coordinator Nathaniel Hackett, backfired in a 31-21 loss last week, goofed on the Broncos' final possession before halftime, which led to a Harrison Butker field goal that pushed Kansas City's lead to 13-0.

The Broncos got the ball with 47 seconds left in the first half and were facing third-and-5 from their 44 when they used their second timeout. Right tackle Mike McGlinchey was beaten by Chris Jones, who sacked Wilson for a 7-yard loss with 22 seconds left before halftime.

Losing track of downs, Payton called his final timeout.

"That's a boneheaded mistake by me," Payton said. "They were calling one as well and I'm off by a down, but that was stupid."

While the Chiefs would have called a timeout anyway at that point, the gaffe highlighted Denver's discombobulated offensive operation that produced just 197 yards.

Then, Riley Dixon's punt into a stiff wind traveled just 29 yards, and rookie defensive back Riley Moss touched the ball first after running out of bounds as a gunner, giving the Chiefs another 5 yards.

Butker's 60-yard field goal as the first half expired would come into focus in the fourth quarter when the Broncos pulled to within 16-8 only to allow Butker's 52-yarder with 1:55 left that restored the Chiefs' two-score advantage.

"It's a three-point swing there, but there are so many other things that jump into my mind relative to opportunities missed," Payton said, alluding primarily to the static passing attack that wasted Denver's good ground game and stellar red zone defense.

The Broncos aren't only in search of answers but of chemistry between the new coaching staff and the retooled roster. It's hard to envision the Broncos players rallying around Payton the way the Jets had Hackett's back last weekend in Denver after Payton took needless shots that fired up an opponent.

As McGlinchey said of Payton earlier this month, "He's still learning us, and we're still learning him."

WHAT'S WORKING

Denver's red zone defense, which kept Kansas City's offense out of the end zone on four of five trips inside the 20.

WHAT NEEDS WORK

The Broncos' offense is stuck in neutral or reverse too often to get any rhythm going.

STOCK UP

OLB Jonathon Cooper. He had one of Denver's two sacks to go with a tackle for loss, two QB hits and a pass breakup.

STOCK DOWN

Jeudy, who keeps getting into tiffs with former players. First, it was a rift on X, formerly known as Twitter, with Mark Schlereth and now it's with Smith, who tried to apologize to Jeudy before the game for calling him a "JAG" on his podcast. That's NFL parlance for "just a guy," as in, nothing special. Jeudy refused to accept his apology and responded with a vulgarity.

So, Smith ripped Jeudy on air, adding he would discourage GMs from trading for the fourth-year pro who hasn't lived up to his billing as the highest-drafted receiver in Broncos history. During Smith's next segment with fellow analyst Mike Garafolo, Jeudy bopped up and down behind them while they were on air.

INJURIES

In his first game back from IR, TE Greg Dulcich left in the fourth quarter after aggravating the pulled hamstring he injured in the opener. Dulcich has missed 11 of 22 games in his career because of hamstring injuries.

Harper shines as Phillies aim for 2nd straight World Series

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Bryce Harper has manhandled postseason pressure with the ease of one of his swings—bat tucked behind his helmet, short ground step, then, whack!—against a slider.

He's crushed it.

The drama lies in the postseason not so much in what Harper will do once he digs into the batter's box, but more in what kind of kitschy T-shirt design will surface from each game-changing hit that rings both an hydraulic Liberty Bell and the ears of 45,000 diehard and dyed-in-red Phillies fans.

Maybe a hyped Harper will bellow, "This is my house!" standing on second base after a go-ahead double.

Or perhaps he won't say anything at all, just deliver an icy death stare—two, actually—to a sheepish shortstop who poked Harper with a mocking "Attaboy!"

Harper has turned his Phillies teammates into fans, as they step on the dugout steps and hug the railing for his at-bats, the best seat in the house for the inevitable big moment.

"Any time he goes up there, it's kind of must-watch TV," second baseman Bryson Stott said.

Harper is Mr. Red October, who, after listening to sports talk radio like any good Phillies fan on his commute, arrives at the clubhouse with an intense focus—"it's a locked-in look, I guess," says Stott—that spills into field. He a $330 million bargain, in large part from a resume that screams Philly's greatest clutch athlete; from his NL Championship Series MVP honors a year ago, to the fastest return in baseball from Tommy John surgery, to a speedy transition to first base. He hit three homers and batted .462 in a four-game NL Division Series win over Atlanta that moved the Phillies on the cusp of a second straight World Series trip.

"I signed here for a reason, to do everything I could to bring back a trophy to this town," Harper said. "I got chills thinking about it, because that's what it's all about. I absolutely love this place."

Philly loves him back.

They can show their thanks for him again on Monday when Harper turns 31, the same day the Phillies host Arizona in the NLCS opener.

Harper expects to play in that one after he briefly made Philly lose a breath when he clutched his surgically-repaired right elbow after a Game 4 collision at first base. Harper finished the game, said he was fine and had just stung his funny bone. He flexed his beer muscles in the clubhouse when—shirtless, naturally—he dumped a beer over his head with his right arm.

AP

Philadelphia Phillies' Bryce Harper reacts after hitting a three run home run during the third inning of Game 3 of a baseball NL Division Series against the Atlanta Braves Wednesday, Oct. 11, 2023, in Philadelphia

Inside the jubilant clubhouse, the Phillies had their fun, spraying Harper with beer and gleefully yelling, "Attaboy, Harper! Attaboy!"

Braves shortstop Orlando Arcia had gleefully shouted, "Attaboy, Harper" in the wake of a Game 2 win that ended when Harper was doubled up on the bases, a wisecrack Arcia acknowledged he never intended for the Phillies to hear.

Harper doubled down that his baserunning decision was correct, the aggressiveness just part of his fiery makeup.

"Me, personally, I don't think it was a miscue," Harper said. "But I took a chance, and (centerfielder) Michael Harris made an incredible play. I'm not going to change the way I play because of a moment or situation."

Harper then stared down Arcia on his each of his two Game 3 home run trots (nine total in two Phillies' postseasons).

"I didn't really see it, but I'm sure there's pictures somewhere," Stott said.

Yes, the homers launched the shot memed 'round the world, a message sent that you don't tug on No. 3's jersey.

The Phillies are more than just Harper, of course.

They boast arguably the best 1-2 starting rotation among the four teams left in the postseason with Zack Wheeler and Aaron Nola.

Trea Turner became the first Phillies player with four hits in a postseason game when he went 4 for 4 in Game 4. Against the Braves in Games 3 and 4, Nick Castellanos became the first player to hit multiple homers in consecutive postseason games.

Philadelphia's lethal lineup has led to few ho-hum postseason wins among the 16 over the last two seasons.

They slugged six homers! It's a Stott Slam!

They scored six in the ninth to win it!

It's been riveting October baseball. Every game (yes, even their losses are eventful).

The topper, Rob Thomson, is the second manager in MLB history to reach the LCS in each of his first two seasons.

"I think that he's done pretty consistent at remaining relaxed and understanding that the talent is there to win in the locker room," Castellanos said. "If we don't win, it's not because there's a managerial bad decision. It's because we didn't play well enough."

Harper was hailed as a baseball prodigy since before he was a teen, hailed as baseball's version of LeBron James or Tiger Woods. The Las Vegas sensation blossomed into a star and an MVP with the Washington Nationals. Then came a second life as a postseason conqueror in Philadelphia.

"When I was 10 years old, 11 years old, I played in so many big tournaments and big lights," Harper said. "And I mean, you guys couldn't imagine the pressure of the situations or going to JUCO early and having everybody in the world relying on you to be the number one pick. That was hard.

"You know, 17 years old, 16 years old, trying to be the number one pick, knowing that if you're not, you're a failure. So that's pressure, you know. Trying to make all the money you can to get your family out of an area or set them up for life, that's pressure. This is all cake, man. This is so much fun."

2020s starting to feel like 1990s for Braves after another playoff flop

ATLANTA (AP)—The 2020s are starting to feel like the 1990s for the Atlanta Braves.

Another dazzling regular season.

Another flop in the postseason.

After tying a major league record with 307 homers, the slugging Braves went down meekly to the rival Philadelphia Phillies in the National League Division Series for the second year in a row.

Other than a stunning comeback in Game 2, when the Braves overcame a four-run deficit with a pair of two-run homers and a remarkable double play for a 5-4 victory, the Phillies dominated the best-of-five series.

They handed the Braves their first shutout all season at Truist Park, 3-0 in the series opener. They blasted six homers in a 10-2 rout in Game 3. And they ended Atlanta's season far sooner than anyone expected with three more homers for a 3-1 clincher in Game 4.

After six months of dazzling play and an MLB-leading 104 wins, it was all over in the space of six days as the Braves and two other division winners, the 100-win Los Angeles Dodgers and AL-leading Baltimore Orioles, were wiped out early.

"A phenomenal year for our club," manager Brian Snitker said. "It didn't end the way we wanted it to, but it doesn't always do that in this game."

In the 1990s, the Braves began a record-setting run of 14 straight division titles that included only one World Series title.

They are now in the midst of six straight NL East titles. But a 2021 World Series title is the only time the postseason didn't end in disappointment.

"Look, nobody has the exact formula," general manager Alex Anthopoulos said Friday, less than 24 hours after the final out. "If they did, the same team would be winning year after year. That's what makes baseball great. You're constantly looking for answers."

The last two years have left the Braves with plenty of questions.

They chased down the New York Mets to win the East with 101 wins a season ago and earned a first-round bye, only to be knocked off in the NLDS by a Phillies team that finished 14 games behind and barely squeaked into the playoffs.

Now, another blowout by the Phillies, who again finished 14 games behind Atlanta during the increasingly meaningless regular season.

The culprit this time was a stunner—an offense that produced more runs than any other team suddenly went cold at the most important time of the year.

Take out Austin Riley, who hit .353 (6 of 17) with two homers, and the remaining Braves batted .161 (18 of 112) with one homer and only one other extra-base hit over four games.

Most notably, MVP favorite Ronald Acuña Jr. was held to a measly pair of hits after becoming the first player in big league history to post 40 homers and 70 stolen bases in a season. He stormed out of the clubhouse after the clinching game, declining to speak with the media.

Anthopoulos was at a loss to explain the sudden power outage, which was especially jarring as the Phillies did a pretty good imitation of the Braves by smacking 11 homers. Nick Castellanos outhomered Atlanta all by himself, going deep twice in both Games 3 and 4.

"We're a team that slugs," Anthopoulos said. "No one would doubt we have a lot of power on this team. We just didn't slug in this series."

The division series also exposed an issue that the Braves navigated successfully during the regular season—a lack of starting pitching.

Max Fried missed a large chunk of the season, and Kyle Wright—a 21-game winner in 2022—barely pitched at all. Snitker covered the losses by using 16 starting pitchers, led by 20-game winner Spencer Strider.

But Strider was beaten twice in the NLDS, Fried struggled in his lone start and Bryce Elder was hammered in a Game 3 rout that finished off his troubling second-half slide.

Just before the playoffs began, the Braves learned that Wright needs major shoulder surgery and will miss the entire 2024 season as well. And the future of 14-game winner Charlie Morton is uncertain after a sprained finger kept him from pitching in the postseason.

Morton, who turns 40 next month, has a $20 million team option for next season. Anthopoulos wouldn't say if they will exercise the option, and Morton hasn't said if he plans to pitch another season.

Even if Morton returns, the Braves are likely to seek starting pitching help—perhaps dangling infield prospect Vaughn Grissom, who doesn't appear to have much of a future in Atlanta, as trade bait.

76ers star Harden says he has 'lost trust' in Daryl Morey, front office

CAMDEN, N.J. (AP)—Philadelphia 76ers star James Harden remained steadfast that his fractured relationship with the front office can't be repaired.

Harden has yet to play in the preseason. But he did attend training camp and continues to practice with the 76ers in the wake of the disgruntled guard's trade demand.

Harden in June picked up his $35.6 million contract option for this season with the belief the team would try to trade him. He blasted team president Daryl Morey at a promotional event in China when no trade materialized, calling Morey a liar.

"It's not even about this situation. This is life," Harden told reporters Friday at team's complex in New Jersey. "When you lose trust in someone, it's like a marriage. When you lose trust in someone, you know what I mean? It's pretty simple."

Harden has been one of the league's top players for the past decade, having won three scoring titles and the 2018 league MVP award. He led the league in assists last season.

AP

Philadelphia 76ers forward P.J. Tucker, left, talks with guard James Harden during the NBA basketball team's practice on Thursday, Oct. 5, 2023, in Fort Collins, Colo.

Harden said he could try to play in the Sixers' preseason finale on Friday against Atlanta. Harden was evasive about the status of his trade demand.

"You've got to talk to the front office about that," he said. "I've just been here working my butt off. I love the game of basketball, so I'm just in the gym putting the work in. It's all I can control."

Part of Harden's complaint stems from his belief he should have earned a long-term contract with the Sixers after last season. It never came, thus the trade demand.

"I wanted to be here and retire a Sixer, and the front office didn't have that in their future plans," he said. "It's literally out of my control. It's something I didn't want to happen to be in this position."

Harden is a 10-time All-Star but essentially forced his way with trades out of Houston and Brooklyn and now still seems intent on adding the Sixers to the list, saying he showed up in large part to meet certain contractual requirements. It appeared playing as the second option behind NBA MVP Joel Embiid and chasing a championship in Philly is no longer seriously on the table.

But he is still in uniform. And with him, the 76ers remain a threat under new coach Nick Nurse—though behind favorites Milwaukee and Boston—to emerge out of the East.

"I'm here putting work in. that's all I can do. I work my butt off," Harden said. "You can say whatever you wanna say about me, but you don't get this far in this league without putting work in. That's what I hang my hat on. So whenever things fail or things don't go how you feel they should go, you just continue to work, and that's it."

Hornets' Miles Bridges turns himself in after arrest warrant issued over protection order

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—Charlotte Hornets forward Miles Bridges turned himself in on Friday after an arrest warrant was issued for an alleged protection order violation stemming from a domestic violence case last year.

Bridges turned himself in early in the morning in Lincoln County, a suburb of Charlotte. He was accompanied by his attorney, according to Larry Seagle, the public information officer for the Lincoln County Sheriff's Office.

Bridges appeared before a district court judge and was released on $1,000 bond.

The 25-year-old Bridges had been in Washington, D.C., on Thursday night as the Hornets played the Wizards in a preseason game, according to a team spokesman. Bridges did not play because he is suspended by the league.

The warrant had originally been issued on Jan. 2, but had not previously been served.

Bridges "unlawfully" and "knowingly" violated the protection order, and "continually contacted the victim," according to court documents made public Friday.

Bridges is also set to be served a criminal summons for an Oct. 6 allegation of violating a protection order, misdemeanor child abuse and injury to personal property.

That criminal summons had not yet been served as of Friday morning, per court documents.

JOETEN

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of Team NMI's athletes and coaches, along with chef de mission Nick Gross.

Tan thanked each sponsor and said if it wasn't for them, the CNMI wouldn't have been able to send a big delegation.

Joeten Daidai's Palacios said after turning over the check, "The Joeten Daidai Foundation is proud to help sponsor in order to reach NMSA's goal of sending you guys there. Please remember that you guys will be representing our islands. Practice diligently, work hard, and have a good time. Thank you."

She added in an interview later, "the reason why we always decide to donate is to help give back to our people. We are One Marianas so these athletes will be representing us over in the Solomon Islands and we just want to help achieve their goal to get there."

Triple J's Jones said, "We are very happy in Triple J to be able to participate in a small way… but, we know this couldn't happen without Jerry Tan. So, we thank you for all your efforts in getting the team down. And I'm sure they're going to make us happy with all their results."

IT&E's Palacios, for IT&E/IP&E's part, said "we always support the community. And this is a great opportunity for us to send our athletes to the Pacific Games, and we are always happy and willing to be a part of this. Thank you."

If it wasn't for the charter flight, Justin Andrew, manager of the national va'a team, said that they wouldn't have been able to send a big va'a team.

Gross said of the sponsorships, "I think it's pretty incredible, given the economic downturn in the CNMI. The ability for these businesses to come up and support team NMI this way is a godsend. It really is incredible support that we, on behalf of NMSA and Team NMI, we're so grateful for the support. Hopefully it pays out big in the accomplishments of our teams while we're in the Solomons. Again, going from days and days of travel to get there, to suddenly a four and a half-hour flight and being in Honiara, Solomon Islands I think should really work to benefit the team and in our ability to perform."

COLISAO

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place was Tahiti's Kutea Utia.

Colisao said his experience at the camp was "amazing. It's a totally different environment being surrounded by the best weightlifting athletes in the region. I was a little intimidated by how intense they are with their passion for the sport."

As for how he felt breaking his personal bests, he said "It felt great to break my old PR numbers. I trained everyday with the thought about breaking them since after the Pacific Mini Games last year. Finally achieving it is great, but now I have new numbers I need to break."

In terms of what's next for him, he said "I hope to compete more and continue to break my numbers and row to be the best athlete I can be." Colisao is part of the weightlifting team representing CNMI in the Pacific Games this Nov. 15 to Dec. 3.

"I'd like to thank the OWF and Samoa Weightlifting Federation for the chance to train in the camp and for the amazing experience," said Colisao.

John Davis, weightlifting coach who accompanied Colisao, said "The purpose of the first of its kind of camp was to prepare Oceania weightlifting athletes and their coaches for the Olympic weightlifting qualifiers to be held in the region from now until April 2024. Joey had the rare opportunity to interact and work out with coaches, athletes, and medalists from the Olympic Games and Commonwealth championships."

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CNMI's Joey Colisao, center, is the Oceania U23 Weightlifting Championship 2023 +109kg champion and is joined on the podium by second place Samoa's Fomai Faimanifo and third place Tahiti's Kutea Utia at the Samoa High-Performance Center in Apia, Samoa that was held last Sept. 28 to Oct. 4.

BODYBUILDERS

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she'll bag a podium finish, the 30-year-old said, "I really don't know what to expect. I have gotten accustomed to the bodybuilding and posing style of the NPC/IFBB federation standards. For this competition coming up, we will be judged according to WBPF standards which are really different. We were just informed of the change late September so I had to basically learn new poses and create an entirely different routine."

Even with that, she is optimistic and said "It feels challenging only because it's something very new so I am going to do my best to polish it up, bring my best package, and bring home some hardware."

Tudela, who is a public outreach specialist for the Department of Lands and Natural Resources' sea turtle conservation program, is a few months already into her preparation and said she has about six more weeks to go, so she hopes "I can really shred and improve the areas I feel need more work on." She trains six days a week at the Latte Built Gym and thanks team coach Derek Cutting for the guidance."

For Laxa, who is just a year into the sport of bodybuilding, he said, "Honestly my expectations aren't so big, I just want to bring a better package than I brought last June. I was at my unhealthiest and heaviest weight last year at 228 lbs. So, to come from that to now, no matter what the result is I will be happy."

On his thoughts of placing in his bodybuilding 65kg division, Laxa said, "If I bring a better package than I brought last June, I will be happy. I know competition off island is tough and granted that this is only my first year, I will be happy with any outcome. It's not every day you get to go out and represent your island."

The 23-year-old soccer coach and referee trains 3-4 times a week, but said that it will change soon. He said, "I'm very fortunate that Latte Built Gym has given me a free membership until competition day. As of right now, I'm being coached by Lorenzo "Elmo" Sanchez with the guidance of Derek Cutting, owner of Latte Built Gym."

Mahomes throws TD pass as Chiefs beat Broncos, 19-8.

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Joeten, IT&E/IP&E, Triple J sponsor Pacific Games

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

The 2023 Pacific Games from Nov. 15 to Dec. 3 is less than a month away and local companies are stepping up and supporting Team NMI with their sponsorships.

Joeten Daidai Foundation, Triple J Saipan, and IT&E/IP&E have donated $10,000 each for a total of $30,000. This amount is going toward the charter flight that is flying the entire CNMI delegation of over 100 athletes to the Solomon Islands. This is the first time that the CNMI is using a charter flight to fly its athletes.

The flight is leaving on Nov. 15 at 8pm and arriving at Nov. 16 around 1:25am. The return flight is on Dec. 3 at 8:35pm.

The importance of having a charter flight instead of using a commercial flight is the cut in cost and time needed for travel. Airfare per passenger in the charter flight to the Solomons is $1,600 compared to between $3,500 and $4,000 in a commercial flight. Also, travel time via charter is just a little over four hours, while commercial takes 50 to 55 hours with at least three stops and two overnight stays.

In a ceremony last Friday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium, Northern Marianas Sports Association members, including president Jerry Tan, and Joeten Daidai Foundation executive director Patty Palacios, Triple J Saipan president Bob Jones, and IT&E executive director Velma Palacios and Customer Operations executive director Rob Harrell, joined some

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LEIGH GASES

Joeten Daidai Foundation executive director Patty Palacios, seated, left of check, poses with Northern Marianas Sports Association president Jerry Tan, seated, right of check, along with Triple J Saipan executives, NMSA members, and CNMI athletes and coaches, during a check and sponsor presentation for the Pacific Games 2023 CNMI delegation's charter flight at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium last Friday morning.

LEIGH GASES

IT&E's executive director Velma Palacios, right of check, poses with Northern Marianas Sports Association president Jerry Tan, left of check, along with IT&E/IP&E executives, NMSA members, and CNMI athletes and coaches, during a check and sponsor presentation for the Pacific Games 2023 CNMI delegation's charter flight at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium last Friday morning.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Triple J Saipan's president Robert Jones, left of check, poses with Northern Marianas Sports Association president Jerry Tan, right of check, along with Triple J Saipan executives, NMSA members, and CNMI athletes and coaches, during a check and sponsor presentation for the Pacific Games 2023 CNMI delegation's charter flight at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium last Friday morning.

Bodybuilders Tudela and Laxa ready to take on Pacific Games

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Bodybuilders Christina Tudela and Davy Laxa are making their final preparations as they get ready to represent the CNMI and take on other bodybuilders in the 2023 Pacific Games in Honiara, Solomon Islands that will be held from Nov. 15 to Dec. 2.

Both have competed and won in their respective categories of the local bodybuilding competition—the Dee Clayton Classic & Northern Marianas Bodybuilding and Physique Federation Championships—and were selected from a pool of bodybuilders.

Tudela is bringing with her three years of experience and won first place in the bikini category in 2021 and third place in the figure category in 2022. Laxa has only been in the sport for a year and has won second place in the short class of the men's physique category last June.

Tudela, who is competing in the model physique division, said the competition is going to be fierce, "especially considering that there will be 24 competing countries, so it's going to be a fun challenge."

As for whether she thinks

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Tudela

Laxa

Colisao is Oceania +109kg champion, breaks PB's in Samoa

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Weightlifter Joey Colisao continues to raise the bar in the sport of weightlifting as he's the Oceania U23 +109kg champion, while also breaking his personal bests during the Oceania Youth, Junior, and U23 Weightlifting Championships 2023.

Colisao attended the 1st Oceania Regional Senior Elite Weightlifting Training Camp at the Samoa High-Performance Center in Apia, Samoa that was held from Sept. 28 to Oct. 4.

In the championships after the camp, Colisao won gold in his division with a 130-kg snatch and 160-kg clean & jerk for a total of 290kg. He said he broke his old total number of 265kg—a 25-kg jump from last year's numbers at the Pacific Mini Games.

Second place was Samoa's Fomai Faimanifo and third

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Weightlifter Joey Colisao shows off his gold medal from the Oceania U23 Weightlifting Championships +109kg Division with coach John Davis at the Samoa High-Performance Center in Apia, Samoa that was held last Sept. 28 to Oct. 4.